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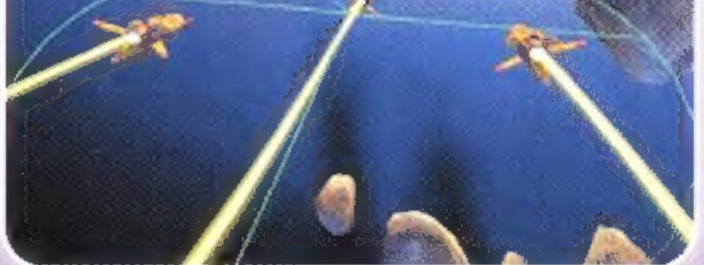

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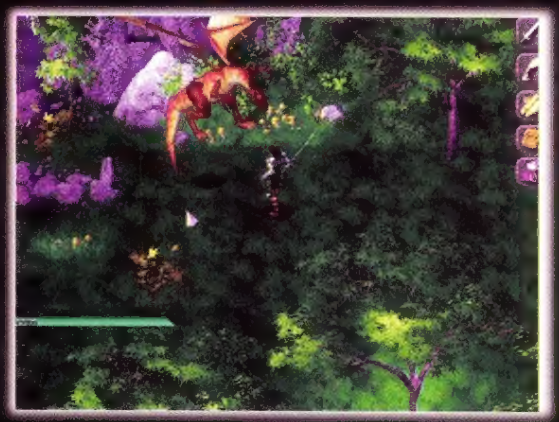

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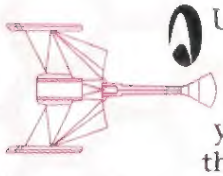

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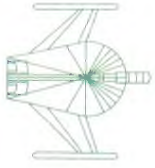
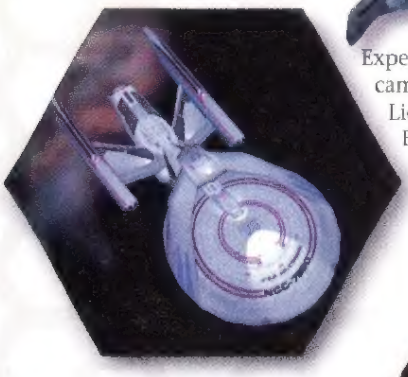


Romulan Battlehawk Destroyer (R-BH)

4 Phaser 1s
2 Plasma Gs
2 Tractors
1 Transporter
Size Class: 4



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# CONTENTS

30

cover story

## The 1999 Electronic Entertainment Expo

*Los Angeles, May 13-15*


**HIGHLIGHTS** — QUAKE III ARENA PAGE 33 • ONI PAGE 40 • HEAVY METAL FAKK 2 PAGE 55 • THE WHEEL OF TIME PAGE 56 • THE SIMS PAGE 72 • FINAL FANTASY VIII PAGE 88 — **PLUS** THE COMPLETE LIST OF UPCOMING GAMES

COLUMNS


**Upfront** The state of the game
*It's going to be a great year!*
BY STEVE BAUMAN

**Over the Net** The latency problem
*Why your online experiences may not be satisfying*
BY ANDREW REINHARD

**Command Post** Build my game
*Strategy games I'd like to see*
BY ELLIOTT CHIN

## hardware

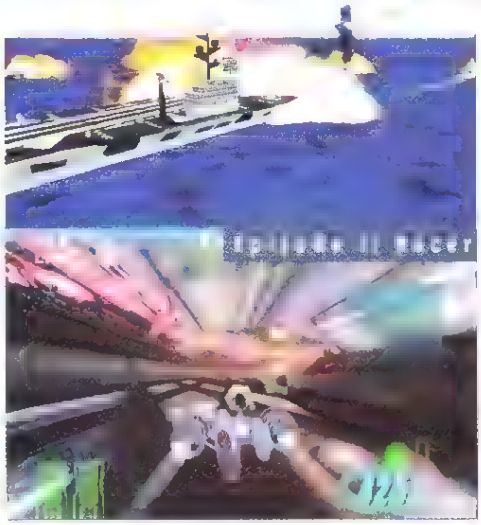
FAQs— *The next big thing*
REVIEWS—
Max Gamer Xentor
Rage Fury

## reviews

MechWarrior 3
Fleet Command
Ep sode I· Racer
Midtown Madness

## rebound

Reviewing the reviews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**Road to Nowhere** F nd ng sublime romance
*A note to the well adjusted gamer*
BY CINDY YANS

**The Hangar** Just a matter of time
*Simulating the US Air Force—while the US Navy sims with Flight Simulator* BY BEN CHIL


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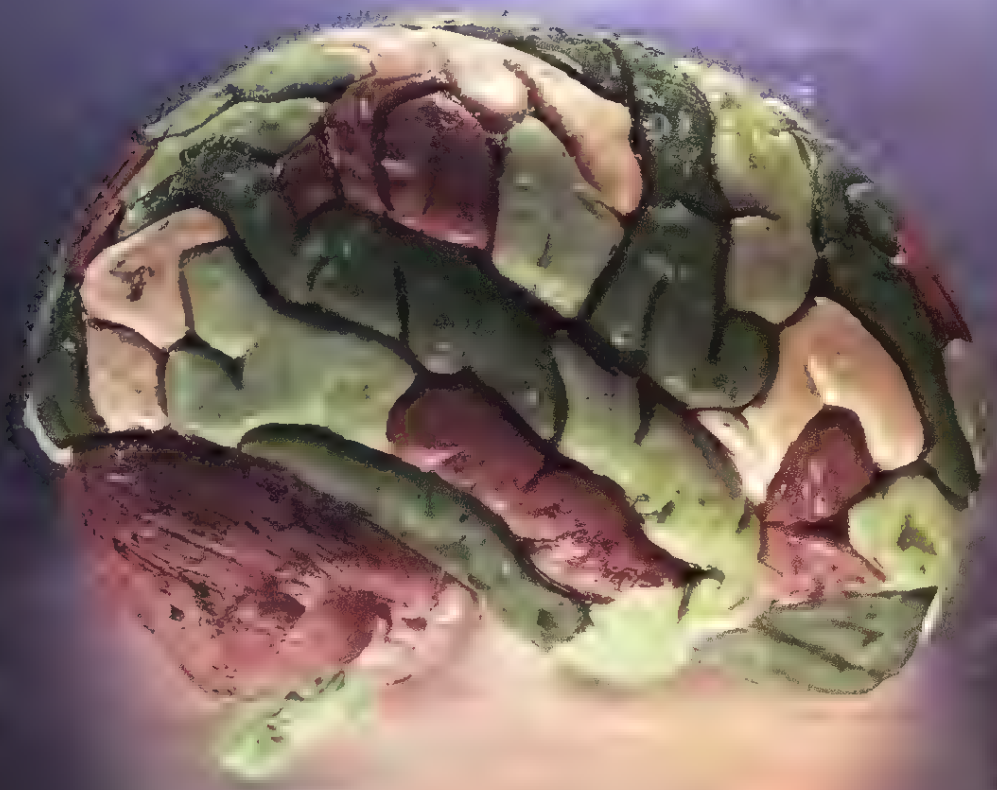

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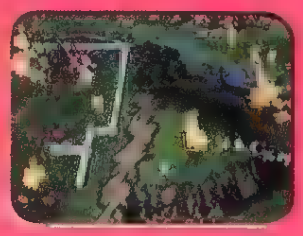

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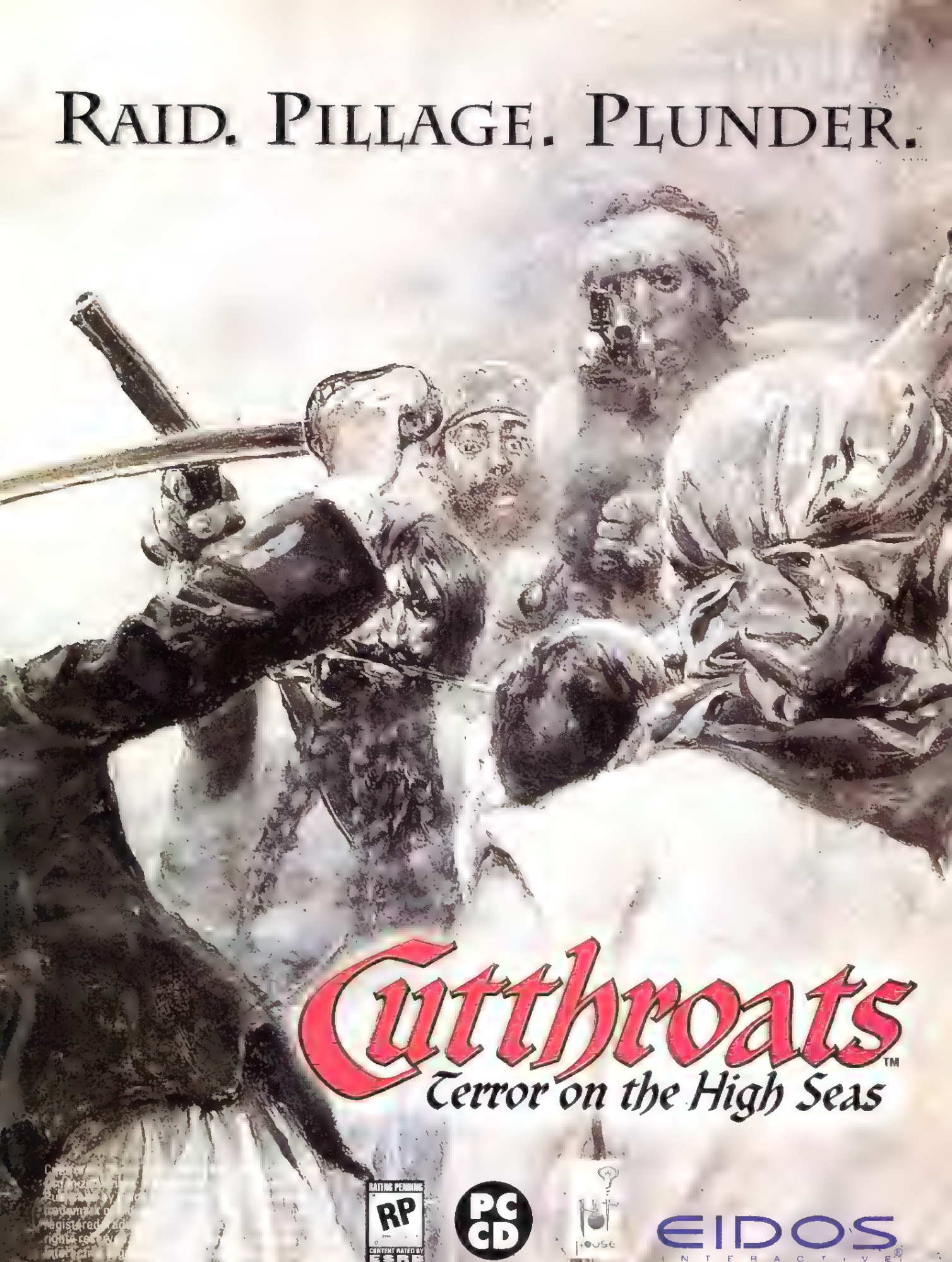

# Cutthroats™
## Terror on the High Seas

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# The latency problem

## *Why your online experiences may not be satisfying*

*by André Vrignaud*

Time passes, and it often seems as though every new day has something intriguing for us to be aware of and assimilate. Quite a few of these advances are directly relevant to our topic of online gaming... as are quite a few that aren't. I can tell from some of the questions I get that there seems to be some confusion as to which technologies actually affect the online gaming experience, and thought I'd take a few moments to try and explain some of the issues involved.

One of the most common questions revolves around just how fast a computer one needs to have a good online gaming experience. Many people have had poor game experiences in the past, and the computer is often assumed to be the problem. In fact, it's quite possible your computer is perfectly fine as-is, and that other factors (which we'll address below) are the culprit.

As far as playing an online game on your current computer goes, the first thing to check is the game experience when playing offline. Online gaming really doesn't add much CPU overhead, and as such, if you can play a smooth, reliable game while offline, it's quite likely your computer isn't the culprit if you have a bad experience online. This rule of thumb seems to hold quite true across all genres, including 3D shooters, real-time strategy and simulations.

If you've eliminated the basic computer as the issue, you're probably found the same Achilles Heel individual game players, along with the rest of the industry, have been battling since the beginning of recorded on-line time: latency.

Latency is not the same as bandwidth. Bandwidth is simply the size of your "pipe" to the Internet. Most people who dial-in with modems to the 'Net have bandwidth equivalent to their modem's and ISP's (Internet Service Providers) capabilities—usually 28.8 or 56 kilo bytes per second. One thing to remember though is that the actual bandwidth most games require at this point is well within the limits of a 28.8Kb connection, a 56Kb modem usually has the exact same performance characteristics in online gaming and tends to be most useful when surfing.

Back to latency. Latency is quite simply the time it takes a packet of information to be transmitted from one computer to another, and then back again. This is key because it's these packets that tell the other computers in your game (be they clients or servers) the state of your game world; if a packet is delayed, you commonly see the game lag, skip frames, or perhaps even look unrealistic ("*I know* I shot him!").

A modem is actually one of the worst ways to connect to the 'Net when it comes to latency. The modems we use now impose roughly a 30 ms latency penalty every time data goes through and is modulated/demodulated between analog and digital data. Considering that there are four modems between you and any other gamer (your modem ➡ your isp's modem ➡ their isp's modem ➡ their modem) you can quickly see where 120 ms of overhead is incurred. Double that for your return trip, and add in roughly 50 ms to cross the country (speed of light, you know), and you quickly see why it's quite rare for modem gamers to have a ping time of less than 300 ms.

New technologies such as xDSL and Cable Modems are interesting because they're already fully digital, and do not have to modulate and demodulate data into the digital modem as do modems. As such, you only incur a 15 ms penalty for passing through *all four* "modems", and only a total of 30 ms total for a complete roundtrip (*not* including the overhead for coast-to-coast passage, of course). Compare that to the automatic 240 ms penalty modem players have to deal with, and you see why the term "LPB" (Low-Ping Bastard) came to be associated with people playing on LANs, xDSL and Cable Modems.

You have several options if you'd like to enhance your online gaming experience. First off, try calling your local cable company or phone company and see if either Cable Modems or xDSL are available in your area. Barring all that, if you're going to be using a modem for the foreseeable future, there are a few things you can do to enhance the experience. First, be sure you have the latest version of your modem's code (if your modem is flash upgradable). Secondly, try to connect at 28.8 whenever possible since the additional modulation done by the modem at higher speeds does add overhead and slows you down. Finally, always be sure to have compression disabled. Many games do a great deal of optimization work to reduce the size of packets and make sure the game runs as efficiently as possible, and unfortunately, the time it takes to compress and uncompress data often cripples these optimizations.

I'm curious—is this information useful to you? Did you use it, and enhance your online gaming experience? Write to us at overthenet@cdmag.com and let us know! ■

*As far as playing an online game on your current computer goes, the first thing to check is the game experience when playing offline.*

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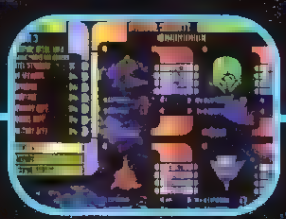
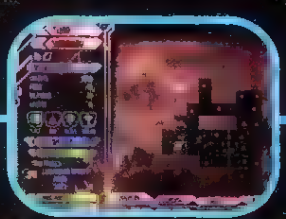


*Control covert operations*



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# Build my game

## *Strategy games I'd like to see*

*by Scott Udell*

It'll be interesting to see how this column turns out. You see, as I start it I'm at something of a loss as to what to say this month. We decided not to spend this month's columns ruminating on the just completed Electronic Entertainment Expo, and that's a good thing as I've used three of the last four Command Posts to talk about where strategy and wargaming are headed. I had one subject in mind for this month—basically, will the Internet help save/reinvigorate wargaming?—but decided to hold off until later in the summer, when some new forays into publishing/distributing via the 'net have had some time to take hold (or not). That leaves me, for once, at a loss—what to say, what to say? So I decided to be a bit self indulgent (okay, even *more* self indulgent) and toss out some ideas for strategy and wargames *I'd* like to see.

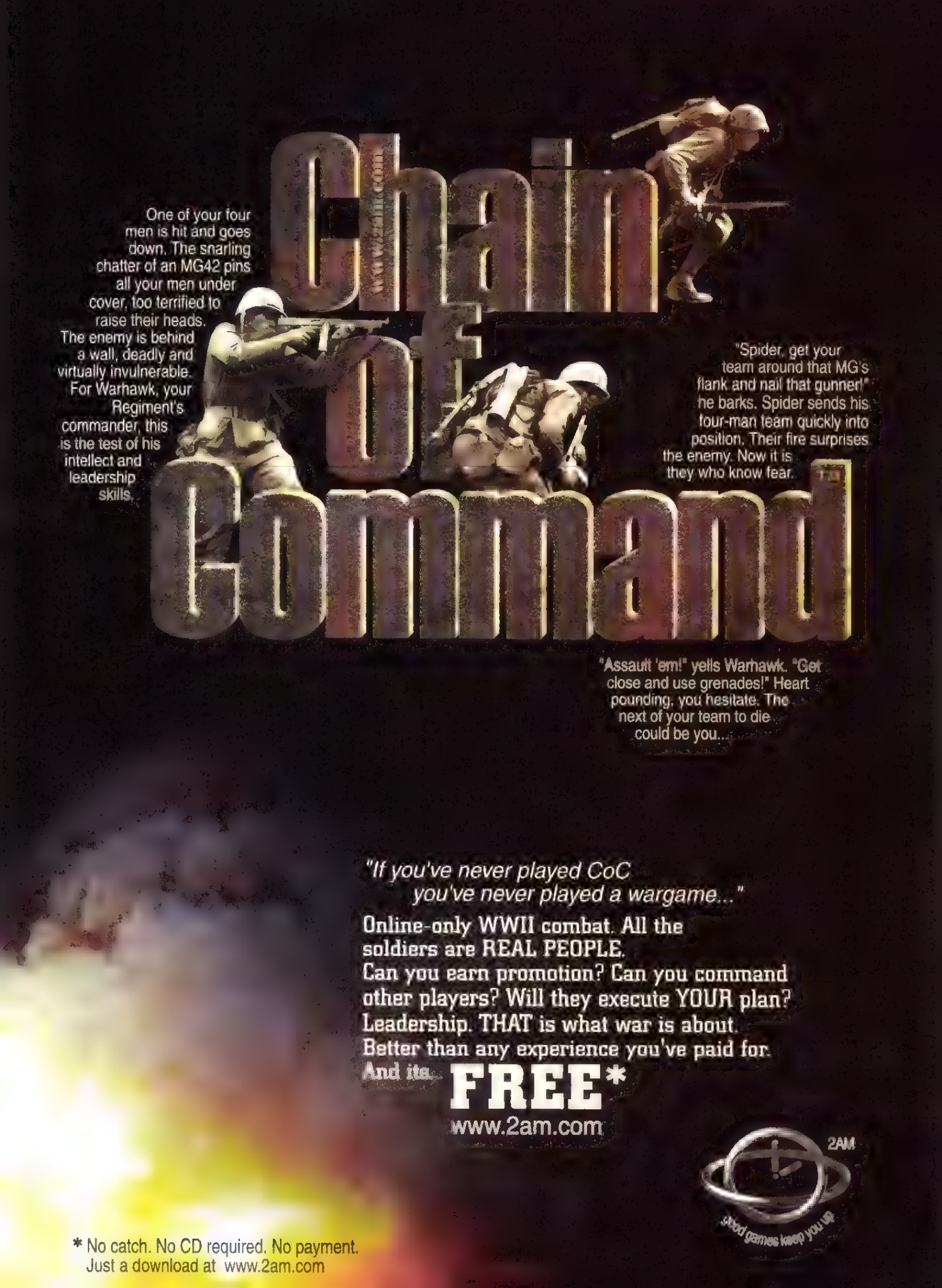
First on my list, and completely unoriginal, but I want a sequel to *X-COM*. Not one that puts me in a space sim, or a first person shooter (although I am intrigued by *X-COM Alliance*), or even a real-time one, but just good ol' turn-based style *X-COM*. I wish they'd ditch the storyline branch taken with *Apocalypse*, and instead expand the conflict out into the solar system; can you imagine the neat battles you'd come up with if you had bases on such diverse terrain as Mercury and Europa instead of just Earth? I don't, though, think it should just be *X-COM* multiplied across all these environments—that would be unrealistically massive—but something that takes the flavor of what is still my favorite strategy game (if not game, period) and carries it forward. Of course, word has it that a turn-based *X-COM 6* is in the works, so it'll be interesting to see if my dreams come close to being fulfilled.

*I want the map to be a commander's view of the world, not a nearly perfect representation of where things are. I want sub-commanders with personalities of their own, and strengths and weaknesses I must take into account.*

I want a wargame that more realistically represents command and control. In a tactical battle in particular I want to be able to lose communications with my own units, or to get garbled reports (this was done in text form in SimCanada's *Main Battle Tank: Central Germany* and in some of their other games). I want the map to be a commander's view of the world, not a nearly perfect representation of where things are. I want sub-commanders with personalities of their own, and strengths and weaknesses I must take into account. I want to be in a combat situation where I'm not necessarily top dog, where I get orders from above and have other commanders' units on each side of my own that I must take into consideration. I know many (most?) wargamers, especially fans of turn-based games, tend towards control freakishness—"let me command every single company at Gettysburg" (I admit, I like this at times myself)—so perhaps I'll not see a game like this... although it'll be interesting to see how Empire's *Wargamer: Napoleon* and Interactive Magic's *Road to Moscow* turn out.

There are a number of tactical space battle games coming out, but I'm not sure if any of them will quite fill my varied wants for this genre. Anyone remember *Cosmic Balance*? Something like that, especially if you could design your vessels, would be really neat, but is unlikely in this day of 3D rendered space wars (much harder to make modifiable 3D models, although *Warzone 2100* and its like point the way). Why doesn't anyone make a detailed strategy game set in our own solar system? Quite a few sci-fi stories have shown how you can have a space epic in our own little corner of the universe, but few games have. I want a space opera game with more character, just like a space opera book or movie (what would *Star Wars* be if it was just ships and light sabers?). If I had to name something more like the upcoming "norm" of *Homeworld* or *Conquest: Frontier Wars*, then how about a game set in the universe of the Honor Harrington stories? (Then at least we'd have a good backstory to the gameplay.) Hmm—*Harpoon* in Space instead of *Command & Conquer* in Space?

Okay, I can see that this little bit of blathering has a ready carried me almost to the end of my space, so let me toss it out to you now: what would you like to see in strategy and wargaming? Now, try to be realistic when you ponder this (it's amazing the things I've seen some gamers demand of publishers, things that would be impossible with $20 million budgets and ten years of development). E-mail me at sudell@cdmag.com with your thoughts. ■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One of your four men is hit and goes down. The snarling chatter of an MG42 pins all your men under cover, too terrified to raise their heads. The enemy is behind a wall, deadly and virtually invulnerable. For Warhawk, your Regiment's commander, this is the test of his intellect and leadership skills.
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# Finding sublime romance

*A note to the well adjusted gamer*
*by Cindy Yans*

He proposed last night—marriage, that is. After many, many proposals, he finally got down on one knee and asked The Big Question. Earlier last week, he wanted to go to a secluded hillside, take off all of our clothes and become, well, passionate. Being the shy retiring person that I am, I demurely refused, although I did teasingly turn around and bend over wearing some pretty tight gossamer pants. I suppose that was my mistake. Women can be such teases at times that it's not fair to gentlemen. But it soon became evident that perhaps this was not quite a "gentleman." And because of that, the proposal took me off guard. I barely knew this person. As flirtatious as our relationship had become, I still had my standards. "I believe in *long* engagements," said. "In fact, I believe in actual dating." This saddened him. "But people do it all the time," he said. And they do.

If it hasn't become obvious that I'm talking about online banter, well, I am. *Ultima Online* was a no-dice experience for me since it crawled like the proverbial tortoise on my ISP of yore (need I say Internet Service Provider? Nah.). *Meridian* and *The Realm* did not particularly take my gamer heart by storm. But anyone who has read some of what I've written in the last few months can tell you that the massively-multiplayer world of the day, *EverQuest*, has just about consumed me. Because of this, I've come to realize a few things that may not seem like new thoughts to you, but they were to me. Ready?

It had always been my assumption, mostly due to the marketing rhetoric surrounding these massively multiplayer universes that role-playing games, both online and tabletop, are meant for well-adjusted people. These people (from a wide range of ages and avocations) are invited to keep the child inside them alive by "playing pretend." After immersing myself for *way* too many hours in *EverQuest*'s land of Norrath, I have reached a different conclusion. The majority of people playing these games are doing so because of severe deficiencies in their "real lives," or "RL" (the much-used jargon term for jobs, families, potty breaks, soft-boiled eggs, etc.).

*It had always been my assumption, mostly due to the marketing rhetoric surrounding these massively multiplayer universes that role-playing games, both online and tabletop, are meant for well-adjusted people.*

Being amidst the majority (obviously there are also well-adjusted players, they're just not at level 99 yet) is like being part of an immense digitally dysfunctional family. For instance, my aforementioned suitor's character was adventuring with me alone when he became lost in an unfamiliar area and was slain by green and brown diseased and slimy things with yellow ancient eyes—kind of like at the docks in New York City. Since he was a "party member" I would have been able to track his corpse so that he could more easily find it when he returned from his reincarnation location, and he would hence recover all the items he had been holding. I would *also* have been able to gain permission from him to take his things from the room-temp body and return them to him in a safer venue. But no. He disbanded the party (I could no longer see his status as a group member, or his corpse available). After wandering about, I found his body, and I waited nearby. After about 15 minutes (he had stepped away), I found him accessible via messaging. I expressed regrets that he had died. I told him I was near his stuff. I asked how he was. I pleaded with him to answer me. I asked why he was angry. I apologized if it was anything I had done (after all, "getting him lost" might have been a convoluted possibility in his mind). Then I saw his naked character (OK, as naked as they can be in this particular atmosphere) dash by without a pause, collect his stuff, and dash away. Feeling like a complete jerk for continuing to treat the *certifiably* complete jerk like a human being (half-elf that he was), I ran after him shouting, "Wait! Wait! What did I do?" all the way across two zone areas before giving up and telling him that I would not bother him again. The next day, he proposed. Can you say "sociopath?" And this is but one example of many.

I guess most of you who play online (tabletop games are more likely to motivate better behavior) have stories of your own. If you feel the muse, please mail them to me at cyans@cdmag.com. Also, you may want to avoid bending over. ■

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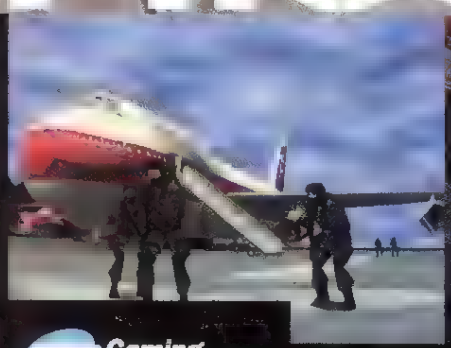

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# Just a matter of time

## *Simulating the US Air Force—while the US Navy sims with Flight Simulator* by Ben Chiu

It's often said that the truth is stranger than fiction. Several recent developments in and related to the sim world have struck me as being exciting yet somewhat ironic at the time. Paul Grace and Jane's upcoming *USAF* title takes the popular *US Navy Fighters* series and gave the United States Air Force inventory their turn. [*As this article was going to press, Grace resigned from EA, Jane's representatives say this will have no effect on USAF's development ed.*] There's little doubt that this will be another popular title, but this time around the Jane's crew in Redwood City are touting (among other things, such as the usual state-of-the-art graphics, yadda, yadda, yadda) "the most advanced modeling ever seen" in the series. (Yes, this includes flight modeling, aircraft graphics, and aircraft systems.) Since Andy Hollis has moved on to command the *Wing Commander* franchise, it was comforting news for many of us to see that Grace attempted to venture towards some middle ground between the hardcore Jane's sims (*Longbow* series and *F-15*), and his usual "lighter" fare. Of course whether that'll be enough to sooth the hardcore fringe remains to be seen. (Which is unlikely as there's *always* something to hate—the old argument that until sims are indistinguishable from the real world there will always be something to pick apart rears its head.) But as long as there's an option to turn things on and off (like every flight sim should) it's a win-win situation for everyone.

Another interesting feature of Jane's *USAF* is that this will be their first title compatible with Jane's *World War* electronic battlefield. Although multi-game, multi-player environments for multiple platforms are fairly common today, if Jane's *World War* comes off as planned it might be the first to feature a persistent battlefield with detailed player-operated aircraft and combat vehicles. While many would have placed bets that the "holy grail" of the combat sim world would have come from some hardcore sim developer such as Hollis' Jane's groups or the *Falcon 4* people, how many would've expected it to be Paul Grace's legacy from Jane's?

*Another interesting feature of Jane's USAF is that this will be their first title compatible with Jane's World War electronic battlefield. Although multi-game, multi-player environments for multiple platforms are fairly common today...*

In a related story about the real USAF, due to the technological migration towards global operations the Defense Department is considering formally changing the name of the U.S. Air Force to the U.S. AeroSpace Force. If that does happen can a Jane's AeroSpace Force be too far off? (Maybe there's more to Andy Hollis' move to the *Wing Commander* franchise than we think?)

Anyhoo, Stephanie L. Jordan of the *Corpus Christi Caller Times* wrote a story with a lead in that read "Navy now requiring use of program adapted by NAS student." (The full story can be read at www.caller.com/autoconv/news/local_99/newsloca613.html.) The "program" referred to was Microsoft *Flight Simulator 98*. It turns out that a cadet modified *Flight Simulator 98* to supplement his flight training and scored higher proficiency ratings than his classmates. Although Microsoft has been subtitling *Flight Simulator 98* as "As Real As It Gets" for sometime, according to the story it seems that the appeal for the Navy is *Flight Simulator 98*'s adaptability to re-create scenery/landmarks and aircraft more than its flight dynamics modeling.

MSNBC columnist Steven Kent once wrote that the appeal of *Flight Simulator 98* is its ability to model where you live and that possibly a "drive yourself home simulator" that models every mailbox and street light in your neighborhood might be as appealing. As sim buffs, we tend to overlook the attraction our genre has for non-sim'ers. It's interesting to see that the USN has viewed *Flight Simulator 98* the same way. Again, who would've thought?

In any event, being a longtime supporter of PC-based simulators for their training value, I'd be remiss if I neglected to mention the inherent training functions that many of our "games" reproduce (albeit often slightly different than with single purpose FAA- or other organization-approved simulations). For example, the cockpit workload in a simulator can initially prepare a non-pilot for the pace of operations more efficiently than flying the real thing can because of the cheaper cost and lowered risk of endangerment. While this news story may not finally signal the unification of desktop simulation games and training simulators, it does indicate that the two are moving towards one another and it may be just a matter of time. ■

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# The State of the Game

## *It's going to be a great year!*

**by Steve Bauman**

Welcome to our annual preview issue! We spent three days in May at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) looking at the most amazing products—our report starts on page 30. We've been doing this giant roundup of all of the upcoming games for the last seven years, and this year's is the best yet! Looking over that list, you can't help but say, "It's going to be a great year."

Whoa, sorry. Spending three days at the bubbly hype fest that is E3 does this to you. It's incredibly easy to be cynical about trade shows, and E3 is no exception. Whether they're about computer games or the latest plumbing gear, trade shows are all about flash and hype. You need half-naked impossibly breasted models, you need dancers in skintight outfits, you need ear-splitting music, you need flashy videos, you need buzzwords, you need shiny happy people handing out free goods. If you do all of this maybe, just maybe, people will come to your booth to actually look at your products.

Ah, the products. Let's not forget that's why we're really at these shows. It's all about games, right? Well... sorta. Aside from serving as a yearly "mine's bigger" contest between publishers (booth size, not... ah never mind), its main purpose is for sales and marketing people to get together to make deals. With enough booth flash and buzzword-compliant demos, companies will convince buyers to purchase thousands of copies of the latest hunting game or sequel, squeezing out the single copy of the game you actually wanted to purchase.

"Oh stop, you're just being cynical." Well, you're right. And it's not far. We really try to get excited over the latest sequel to a game no one liked or the 167th variation on *Command & Conquer*, even if it's the 59th to distinguish itself from the pack by being 3D. In all honesty, some of these games turn out to be pretty entertaining, and a part of me is actually okay with the endless stream of sequels the industry churns out every year. (The entire industry is so geared toward sequel market ing that we're moving beyond "ship it, fix it later" to "ship it, start the sequel.") I'm excited there's going to be *Sid Meier's Civilization III* and I can't wait to play *Age of Empires II*, *Diablo II* and the add-on for *Half-Life*.

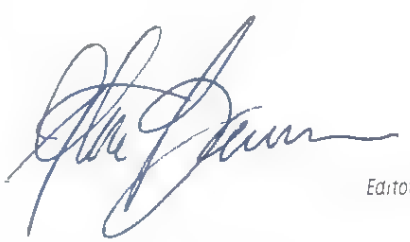
> *Let's not forget that's why we're really at these shows. It's all about games, right?*

But does this kind of development have a cost? Can any PC company come up with a game as bizarre as the PlayStation game *Um Jammer Lammy*, the sequel to the equally surreal *Parappa the Rapper*? Watching weird digital characters playing heavy metal guitar can't help but bring a smile to the face of the most jaded gamer. The only PC game that even comes close to generating this sort of "wow, I've never seen anything like that before" response is Maxis' *The Sims* (see page 72), which is so weird and creepy that I stood transfixed as a group of people tried to navigate the tricky waters of virtual dating. I want that game now, even though I'm completely content playing the less-than-innovative *SimCity 3000*.

It's a lot easier for us to criticize than to create, and for game companies to stick with derivative works rather than risk investors' money on original products. But the optimist in me always thinks that presidents and CEOs of every game company will read our E3 article, call a company-wide meeting, hold the magazine above their heads and scream at the top of their lungs "we're all making the same damn game. I'm paying all of you fools a fortune—can't one of you come up with an original idea?" A timid voice will emerge from the back of the room, and he or she will come forward and proudly say, "I have one." And rather than tell this person, "Sorry, there's no market for your game," it will get produced, be brilliant and spawn a new genre for every other company to rip-off for the next three years.

Ultimately, looking over the list of upcoming games you could be depressed that 138 of the 190-ish games will likely be at best mediocre, or you could be thankful for the 22 good games and the seven brilliant ones. (Yes, those numbers are made up.) But remember this: it's not getting worse. In fact, with fewer games being produced, there may actually be a higher percentage of good games coming out in 1999. There weren't necessarily more good games being produced 5-10 years ago—we just conveniently forget all of the mediocrities. (Of course we reserve a special place in our memories for the truly wretched games.)

Regardless how you feel about the current "State of the Game," just be thankful that you don't have to play all of them—that'll turn even the most bubbly and effervescent person into a jaded and cynical magazine editor. ■



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# NEWS wire

# The 1999 Electronic Entertainment Expo

## *Los Angeles, May 13-15*

55,000 INDUSTRY PEOPLE DESCENDED ON THE LOS ANGELES CONVENTION CENTER to partake in three days of schmoozing, deal-making, partying and ogling booth babes. (Both of the women in the industry ogled that one booth himbo.) Oh, and some games were shown. The show gives us an opportunity to see every single game in development, and with the 2-5 minutes of time allotted for actual product demos (half of which is spent listening to some guy explain why their technology is cool), we were able to put together this article.

So sit down in a comfy chair, put on some soothing music and prepare yourself for the most comprehensive list of upcoming games you'll find anywhere.

## 3DO

### Army Men III

**Genre:** Plastic Action
**The Pitch:** What can possibly add a new level of excitement to the ongoing war between the Green and Tan plastic army men? Aliens! Bug-Eyed Aliens will be teaming up with the Tan Commander Plastron in his quest for world domination. Not to be outdone, Sarge and his Green soldiers team up with a band of Space Troopers to battle the extraterrestrial menace across a number of new worlds that include a spaceship, a city on distant planet and a bathroom
**Picture:** Please make it stop
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Gulf War: Operation Desert Hammer

**Genre:** Military Action
**The Pitch:** Co ben no the wheels. er, tracks.. of an experimental tank nicknamed "The Hammer." Smash through 18 single-player and 18 multiplayer levels with a variety of weapons based on real world ordinance.
**Picture:** What if they gave a war and no one cared?
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Heroes of Might and Magic III: Armageddon's Blade

**Genre:** Turn-based Strategy
**The Pitch:** Players tiring of reducing Erathia to rubble will rejoice at the prospect of an expansion. *Armageddon's Blade* will introduce six new campaigns (26 scenario maps), 38 stand-alone scenarios and some new monsters. A futuristic city was added, then dropped because fans were upset. Apparently they skipped all of the *Might and Magic* role-playing games.
**Picture:** It's like add-on crack. Just. . one... more... hit...
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## ACCLAIM

### Re-Volt

**Genre:** Racing
**The Pitch:** Climb behind the wheels of a variety of tiny remote controlled cars and race them in assorted life-sized environments—a toy store, cruise ship, museum and a botanical garden. The game will also support Internet play
**Picture:** Toy Racer Story
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Shadowman

**Genre:** Third-person 3D Action
**The Pitch:** Imagine a game about the world of voodoo. No, not a world inhabited by a bunch of 3D engineers, developers and *Quake* nuts. The other kind of voodoo, the one popularized by witch doctors and sticking pins into dolls. Now place a guy in that world who runs around killing things
**Picture:** 3dfx Voodoo meets real voodoo
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Throne of Darkness

**Genre:** Action/Role-playing
**The Pitch:** Created by some ex-Blizzard folks who worked on

*Diablo*, this game allows players to assume the role of a Japanese warlord and command his seven elite samurai as they battle the Dark Warlord and his army of Shadow Warriors. A maximum of four samurai can be controlled at once, and the game features a real-time fighting interface that allows players to give their warriors formation and combat commands.
**Picture:** *Diablo*-san
**Release Date:** 2000

### TrickStyle
**Genre:** Gnarly Surfing Action
**The Pitch:** Surfer dudes of the world unite. Riding on gravity boards high above the city streets, surfers compete for fame and fortune. Surfers are awarded points for various stunts and tricks. The tracks will feature renditions of cities such as Tokyo and London and feature a "node-based design that allows players to explore multiple paths through a given course.
**Picture:** "I'm so wasted... and I'm 3D"
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## ACCOLADE

### Demolition Racer
**Genre:** Smashing Racing
**The Pitch:** Created by the developers of *Test Drive 4* and *5*, this game is based on the JSDDA Demolition Derby competition. As its name implies, the game will feature flying debris, visible damage, flames, mayhem, etc.
**Picture:** Crash and burn for fun and profit
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Slave Zero
**Genre:** Big Robot Action
**The Pitch:** There is something about big robots that brings a smile to the faces of gamers everywhere—perhaps it is the simple, visceral attraction of a wanton crush-fest. Elegant in its simplicity, this game allows you to run around towns bowling shit up.
**Picture:** Big robots + big explosions = big fun
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Test Drive 6
**Genre:** Arcade Racing
**The Pitch:** Just as copies of *Test Drive 5* begin to migrate to the bargain bins comes the latest iteration. It promises the usual exciting environments and collection of exotic cars that you probably could never afford in real life. Whether any of the shortcomings of the previous title will be addressed remains to be seen.
**Picture:** *Need for Fewer Sequels*
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Test Drive Off-Road 3
**Genre:** Arcade Racing
**The Pitch:** The action here follows the usual formula of off-road runs over a variety of traction-inhibiting surfaces, and Accolade promises an all-new physics model. While AM General's Hummer will be sporting a new look, the game's visuals seem to be receiving only minor tweaks and still appear limited by the game's PlayStation roots.
**Picture:** Not again?
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

## ACTIVISION

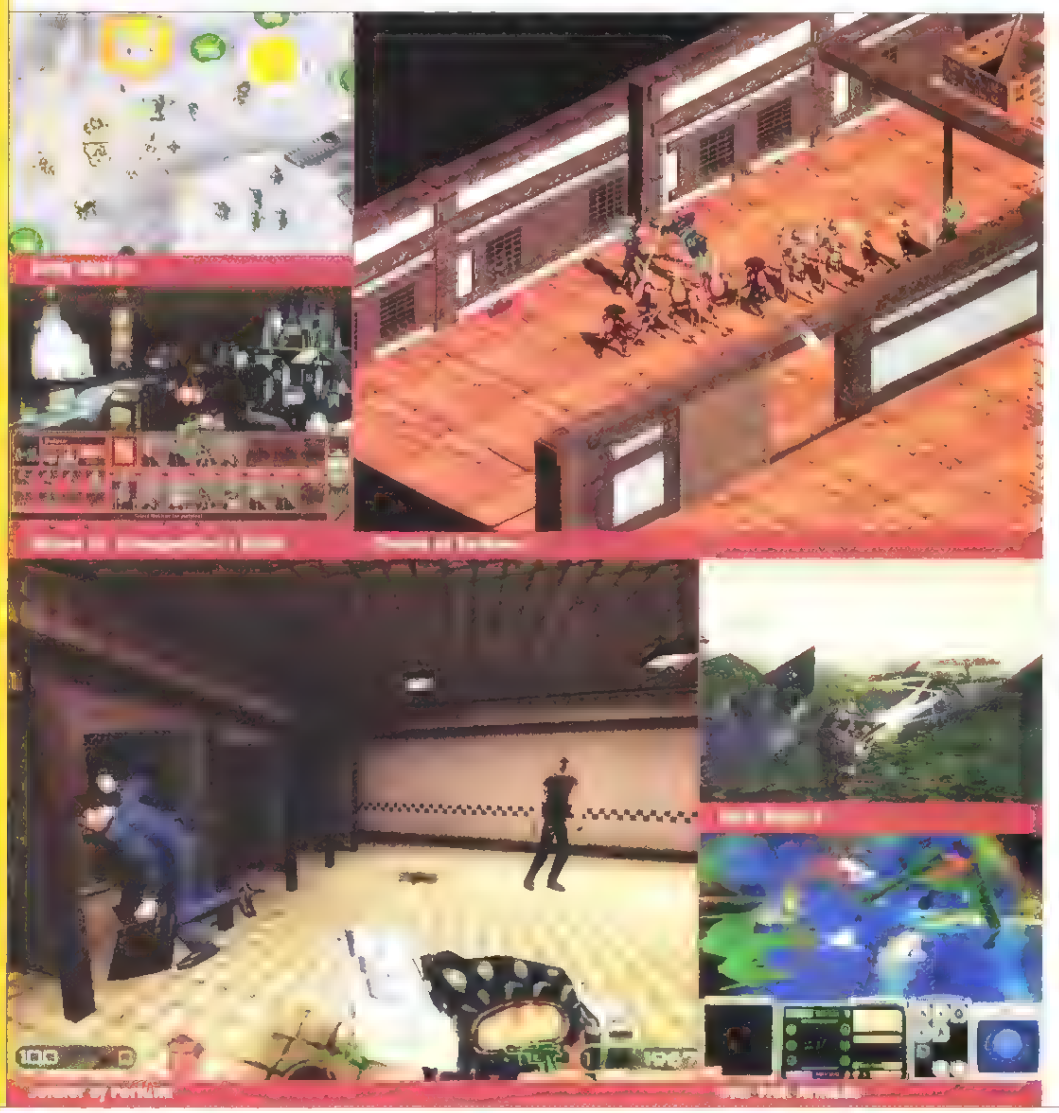
### Battlezone II
**Genre:** 3D Action/Strategy
**The Pitch:** The sequel to the critically acclaimed 3D/strategy hybrid is continuing where its predecessor left off. A gentler learning curve, a reduction and simplification of some extraneous features and an all-new 3D engine make this one to keep an eye on.
**Picture:** Second time's a charm...
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Dark Reign II
**Genre:** 3D Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** While the original game was a standard top-down 2D game, the sequel has jumped big-time on the 3D bandwagon. While you can still get a top-down view, the minute the camera angle swoops to ground level and focuses in on a squad of realistically-sized, polygonal troopers you know that this isn't just a rehash.
**Picture:** Endlessly rotating your view of a battle just so you can see what the hell is going on
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Soldier of Fortune
**Genre:** Violent 3D Action
**The Pitch:** This game wasn't shown on the show floor for fear of offending the mainstream press. And for good reason. In the words of one staffer, "wow, that's really impressive blood." Hyper-violent, Raven's *Quake II*-based game allows you to play a mercenary engaging in the usual run-of-the-mill Soldier of Fortune kinds of duties: rescuing endangered hostages, overthrowing dictators, etc. The game can be played as a squad, and there's lots of cool weaponry.
**Picture:** Congressional hearings
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Star Trek Armada
**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** The Borg are invading the familiar environs of the Alpha quadrant, and it's up to you to command either Federation, Romulan, or Klingon fleet to help stop them. Alternately, you can take charge of the Borg yourself; indeed, in getting through the whole single player storyline/campaign you'll end up playing all four sides. You'll control up to 30 units: starships, repair bases, and space stations and will navigate through the usual collection of *Trek* space terrain, wormholes, nebulae, and asteroids.
**Picture:** *Trek & Conquer*
**Release Date:** 2000

### Star Trek Insurrection
**Genre:** Action/Adventure
**The Pitch:** Developed by Presto Studios, creators of the *Journeyman Project* series of games, this takes place one year after the movie of



# All hail the king of multiplayer 3D action

Quake III Arena
Publisher: Activision
Genre: First-person Action
The Pitch: The project referred to as "Trinity" was earmarked to be the next fundamental leap in id Software's genre-spawning series of first-person shooters. When id first announced that they were shelving it (at least for the time being) in favor of a third installment in the *Quake* series, fans were understandably perplexed and somewhat disappointed. Further announcements that this sequel, now called *Quake III Arena*, would not feature a linear story-based single player mode and would require 3D hardware raised no small amount of controversy. As the biggest fish in the not-so-little pond of first-person action games, id seems to be comfortable riding out whatever waves it makes, and the entire world will certainly be watching when the game is released later this year.

When you consider the strengths of past id titles, their approach to their current project is perhaps a bit less surprising. While some of their games have featured an enjoyable single-player element, they lack the complex story and mission elements featured in other popular single-player first person games. Perhaps recognizing their own limitations, the id decided to rewrite the rules and put together a game in which the single-player and multiplayer games feature very similar design elements.

Rather than present a linear progression of levels, *Arena* will pit the player against AI "bots" in a single-player deathmatch. To give the player a sense of progression, only a small number of levels will be available to play at the start. Ample performance in these levels unlocks a new group of levels, and so on until the player has access to all of the game's levels (roughly 30 at the time of this writing).

Being an id game, it is not surprising that *Arena* will also be a technological tour de force. We've all heard a hundred times about the game's textures, curved surfaces and segmented player models, but when viewing the whole package right in front of you, the sum of these parts makes for a truly impressive whole. Curves are everywhere and simply seem natural, like they belong there. The game is definitely much brighter and more colorful than previous *Quake* games, though the color is a little more subtle than *Unreal*. id has stuck a remarkable balance between flashy effects and subtlety.

The most important test of all is still ahead, and it remains to be seen whether *Quake III Arena*'s unique approach will capture the hearts (and heads, and arms, and other assorted gibs) of fans. One universal attribute that id's games have been praised for is their rich attention to atmosphere, and while none of their games have been particularly heavy in the story department, it might prove difficult to establish a similarly oppressive ambiance without any narrative frame of reference at all. Still, if anyone can do it, id probably can, and there will likely be no shortage of developers willing to license the engine and twist it to their own evil purposes. *Half-Life 2*, anyone?
Picture: Ch-ching
Release Date: Fall 1999

## briefs

E3 EDITION Havas Receives Ten Awards at E3—Havas Interactive captured close to a dozen of the software industry's most prestigious awards at the E3 Expo. The Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences awarded Valve's *Half-Life* "Computer Game of the Year" and "Action Game of the Year" while Dynamix' *Starsiege TRIBES* received "Action/Strategy Game of the Year"... Eidos and Timeline Studios Team Up—Timeline Studios, the newly formed computer gaming company of best-selling author Michael Crichton, and Eidos today announced a major publishing and investment deal. Under the terms of the agreement, Eidos has taken a long-term equity stake in Timeline Studios. The investment will fund the development of a series of titles based on new Crichton properties. The first, as yet unnamed, title from Timeline Studios is expected to be published in the first half of 2000... Activision Secures Worldwide Publishing Rights for Tenchu II—Bless you. Activision announced that they have entered into an agreement with Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) to publish *Tenchu II*, the prequel to *Tenchu: Stealth Assassins*. Under the agreement, Activision acquires the publishing rights for the PlayStation and the PC versions of the game worldwide, excluding Japan...Tabletop Blizzard—Blizzard Entertainment announced a series of strategic licensing partnerships for three game properties: *Diablo*, *StarCraft* and *Warcraft*. The company will market products and novelties based on the popular titles including novels, pencil and paper role-playing games, strategy guides and action figures. They are also in negotiations with a major book publisher to license book rights for all three game universes. Under a nine-book deal, three novels will be published for each game. The first in each series will begin appearing during the spring and summer of 2000. Wizards of the Coast subsidiary TSR Inc. is in charge of producing role-playing adventures set in the *Diablo* and *StarCraft* worlds, as well as other fast-play games, boxed sets and adventure modules. The *Diablo* games will be based on the *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* rule book, while the *StarCraft* products will follow the *Alternity* science fiction role-playing rules system. The first of these games are scheduled for release later this year... Loki To Port Three Popular PC Games To Linux—Loki Entertainment Software announced that they have signed definitive contracts to port three more titles to the Linux operating system this year: Bungie's *Myth II: Soulblighter*, PopTop Software's >>>

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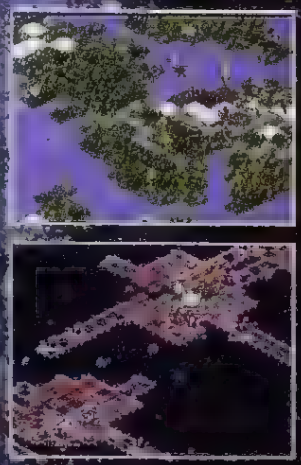

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MICROPROSE

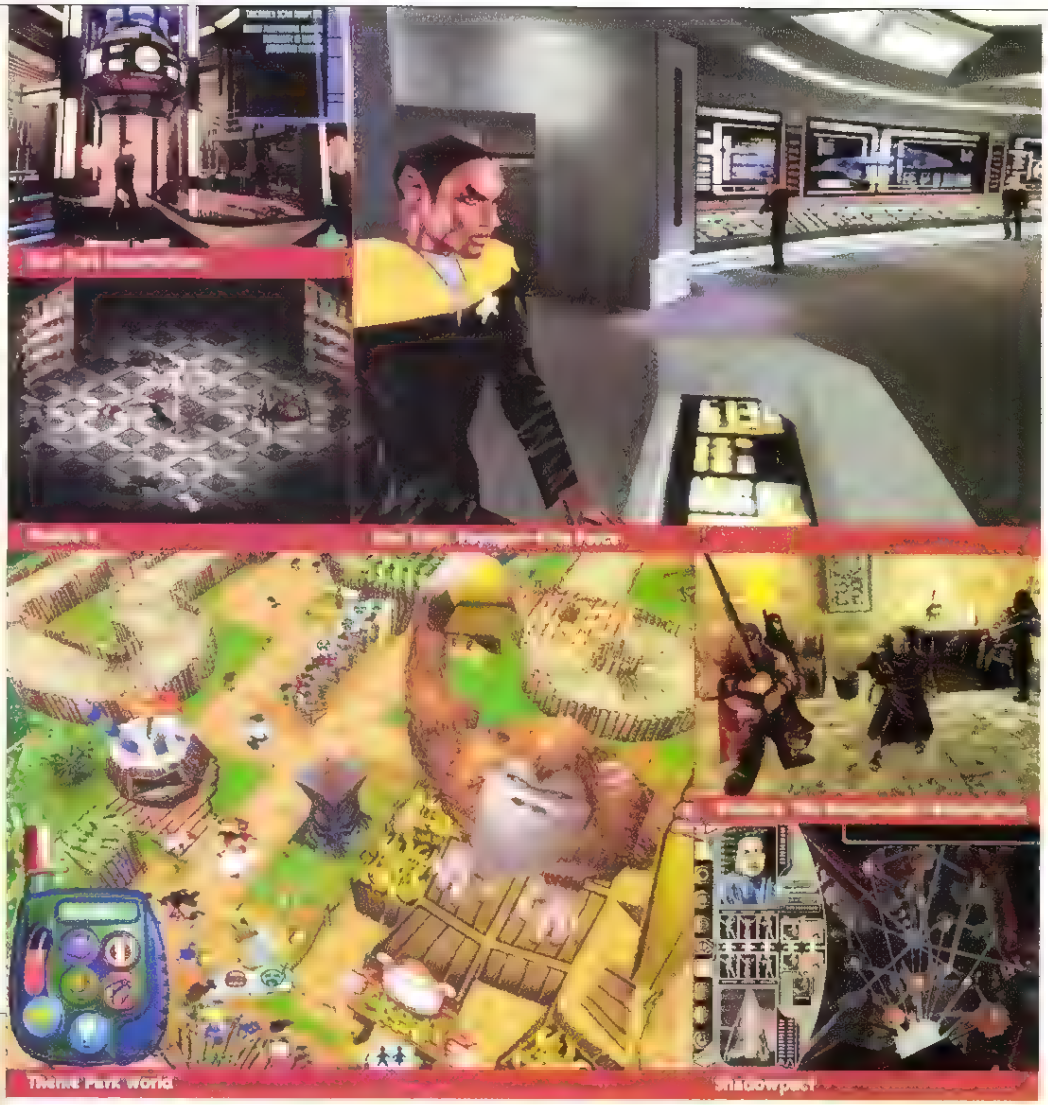
## briefs

>>> *Railroad Tycoon II* and Delta Tao Software's *Ultimate Solitaire*... **Mac Bound**—Interplay signed a deal with Graphics Simulations Corp. to bring *Baldur's Gate* and *Descent 3* to the Macintosh... **Interactive Magic Sells Out to UbiSoft**—Interactive Magic announced that they have reached an agreement to sell off their CD-ROM product line to French publisher/distributor UbiSoft for cash... **MechWarrior 3 Market ng Muscle**—Hasbro Interactive is getting ready to give *MechWarrior 3* one of the biggest media pushes in the company's history. Hasbro plans on a mainstream media push in the form of print, online, in-cinema advertising and a television campaign. The first fruits of their labor will begin with a television commercial on May 31, 1999, airing during the series finale of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. The company will also run thirty second spots in movie theaters beginning June 14 across the nation. The movie theater spots will run four a four week period and will be shown with such movies as *Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace*. The ads will feature combat between BattleMechs from the game. **Titus Bails out Interplay**—Titus Software has increased its stake in Interplay to $25 million into Interplay, giving it a controlling interest in the U.S company. ■

## TOP sellers

1. **CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER**
   Activision • Last Month: *
   Price: $39 • Our Rating: ★ ★
2. **SIMCITY 3000**
   Electronic Arts • Last Month: 1
   Price: $42 • Our Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ½
3. **BIG GAME HUNTER 2**
   Activision • Last Month: 5
   Price: $18 • Our Rating: ★
4. **FROGGER**
   Hasbro • Last Month: 6
   Price: $16 • Our Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★
5. **ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON**
   MicroProse • Last Month: *
   Price: $27 • Our Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★½
6. **MONOPOLY**
   Hasbro • Last Month: 8
   Price: $18 • Our Rating. ★ ★ ★
7. **LEGO ISLAND**
   Learning Company • Last Month: 17
   Price: $16 • Our Rating: N/A
8. **FALCON 4.0**
   MicroProse • Last Month: *
   Price: $24 • Our Rating: ★ ★ ★ ½
9. **RISE OF ROME**
   Microsoft • Last Month: *
   Price: $15 • Our Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★
10. **X-WING ALLIANCE**
    LucasArts • Last Month: 12
    Price: $44 • Our Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★½

Source: PC Data Reston, Virginia Month of Apr l 1999




the same name. You're a fresh-faced (we assume) ensign assigned by Captain P card to "discover the true secret of the Ba ku planet and thwart the Romulan threat to destroy the Federat on." You'll use *Trek* toys like comm un cators, tricorders, and phasers to help rescue other Starfleet types and solve puzz es, all as you work to (single handedly, of course) save the Federation. The game uses a third-person view with a switch ng camera *a la Resident Evil*
**Picture:** *Resident Trek Evil*
**Release Date:** 2000

### Star Trek: Voyager—Elite Force
**Genre:** F rst person Act on
**The Pitch:** The first game based on the *Voyager* TV series, *Hazard Team* is a first person shooter that will use that tie-in to place you in the interesting env ronments the Voyager crew experiences Developed by Raven Software and utilizing the *Quake III* engine, t will have cooperative and deathmatch modes and will introduce new characters
**Picture:** *Quake Trek*
**Release Date:** 2000

### Vampire: The Masquerade—Redemption
**Genre:** Role-p aying
**The Pitch:** Based on the White Wolf pen-and-paper games, this 3D RPG s be ng developed by Nihilistic Software. Players take part in a t me-spanning epic quest spanning 800 years in the undead life of one poor sucker. In their journey through the gothic past to a dark modern day, gamers must battle their inner beast and b ood ust wh e hiding the r true nature from mortals
**Picture:** Despite its subject, it's un kely to suck
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## BLIZZARD

### Diablo II
**Genre:** Action/Role-p aying
**The Pitch:** Blizzard is known for taking one project on at a time (at least, one that they tell us about) and actually crafting it nstead of cranking it out. This year's project is perhaps the most anticipated game of the year Better graph cs, more depth, some 3D accelerated goodness... just re ease the damn th ng.
**Picture:** Click, click, sell a couple million copies, click, click..
**Release Date:** Fal 1999

## BLUE BYTE

### Dragon's Lair 3D
**Genre:** 3D Action
**The Pitch:** The team that made the origina.— Don Bluth, Gary Goldman, John Pomeroy and Rick Dyer—is back for this 3D sequel The story is the same: you again contro Dirk the Daring on his quest to save Daphney from the dragon. The game won't be a pure rehash, though, as new characters are be ng added. The one type anve led so far is the Steal Monkey (yes, Steal, not Steel)
**Picture:** A possible future with *Defender 3D, Pole Position 3D, Galaga 3D*... will it never end?
**Release Date:** 2000

### Shadowpact
**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** Secret soc eties, sometimes representing even more mysterious powers, have been at war in the shadows for m llennia. The coming of the techno ogical age

Finally, it's showtime.

Be the Prince.

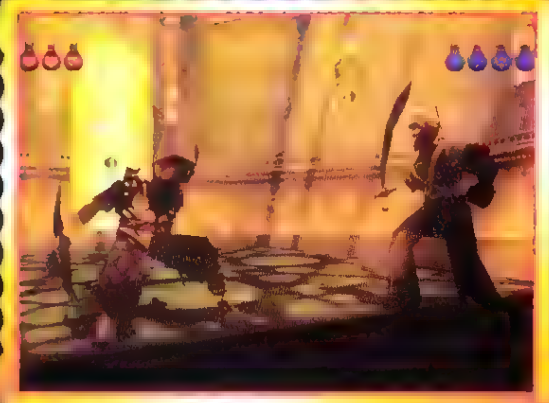
www.pop3d.com

**It's everything you hoped for, and like nothing you expected.**

Remaining faithful to its time-honored legacy, *Prince of Persia 3D* elevates the Prince to new heights with the fast-paced combat of a fighting game and the depth and challenge of a classic Arabian Nights adventure. Stunning animation. Advanced 3D technology. Completely original game design. It's all here as you journey back to exotic 12th Century Persia and answer the game's most compelling question: Is it in you?

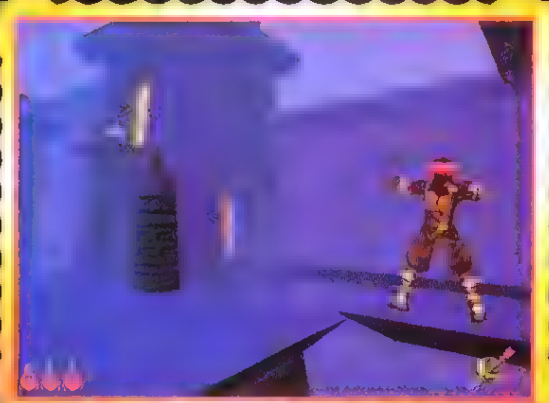
Windows® 95

Journey through 7 environments including an opulent [illegible], a fantastic dirigible, and Tibetan cliffs.



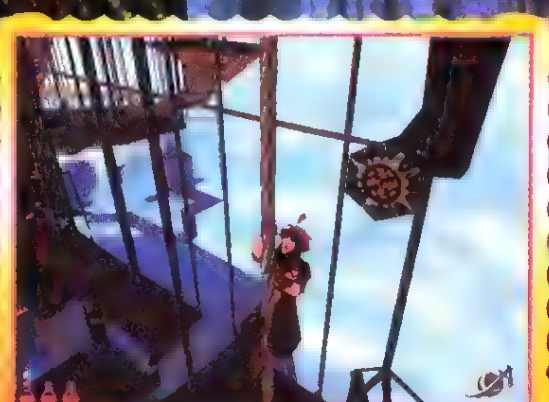
Use deft precision and razor sharp timing to destroy countless foes - each with combat AI that adjusts in real time.

Stealth and agility are your only hope against hundreds of traps like scythes, guillotines and spring loaded spikes.



Your bow and enchanted arrows can silence distant opponents and [illegible] environmental [illegible].

Defeat 30 distinct types of enemies through the mastery of your broadsword, hand-to-hand and double blades.



[illegible] spectacular indoor and outdoor levels will test your wits as well as your resolve.

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Prince of Persia 3D

Is it in you?

NVIDIA

3dfx

RP

REDORB

/98

Ken Slater puts the finishing touches on five years of intense training.

Ken Slater
Pencils
Scratchboard
Scratchboard Illustration

Oni—There's nothing like a nice blue-haired woman who can do some major damage with her fists

## La Femme Konoko

Oni

Publisher: Bungie

Genre: Third-person 3D Action

The Pitch: After a lengthy stint in the real-time strategy arena with both *Myth* games, Bungie is returning to the action fold with *Oni*, a game that combines elements of shooters such as *Half-Life* with the hand-to-hand action of games such as *Virtua Fighter*.

The result feels fresh and unique. A playable build of the deathmatch game was present at Bungie's booth at E3, and even at this early stage the game is addictive. Third-person action games have been plagued by two problems that few (if any) developers have satisfactorily addressed—weapon aiming and camera control. Bungie has an innovative approach to both issues. The camera stays fixed behind the player's character in an "over-the-shoulder" view, and when objects or walls come between the camera and the character, the game engine turns them translucent. It is a practical mechanism that ensures that the player never loses track of either the action or the environment.

Hard-core shooter fans are usually less than impressed with automatic aiming, but putting crosshairs in the center of the screen just doesn't cut it when the player is not looking down the barrel of the gun. *Oni* features a laser-targeting beam that terminates in a red dot on the surface of the first object it encounters, and the player can use the mouse to aim the beam in traditional mouse-look style. It works incredibly well and allows the game to retain the challenge of aiming while presenting the game from a third-person camera.

The real action starts when you holster your weapons—the game boasts a simple but comprehensive set of hand-to-hand combat controls. Keyboard shortcuts allow the player to jump, duck, punch, and kick, and a "special" key enables more dramatic moves. More complex actions can be derived by hitting multiple keys at once. The feel of the controls is similar to those of *Virtua Fighter*, although the Oni engine's ability to interpolate animations allows attacks to be changed or interrupted.

The characters in Oni move in a very realistic fashion (another result of the engine's interpolation features). The anime style of the characters and settings blend with the 3D realism of the engine better than one might expect. While not demoed, the designers refer to their AI system as a "pre-conditioned, constrained neural net," essentially a system that assigns each character with a variety of attitudes (such as fearful or aggressive) and generates variable responses to attacks. The game will feature 8-10 total character "classes," with dozens of variations on each class and a number of unique characters. The character models feature high polygon counts—from 800 for minor characters to 1200 for central characters, and the game will require 3D hardware that supports Glide or OpenGL.

The player will visit some of the game's levels more than once in the game—a fifteen-story police building that the player must defend in one part of the game might be the target of a raid in another. The single-player game will feature 14 different levels and a total of 17 missions. The single-player story will focus on the female character Konoko. Part of a special police unit called the Tech Crimes Task Force (TCTF), Konoko is tasked with infiltrating and destroying a crime syndicate. Bungie is keeping relatively tight-lipped about the plot, but apparently she meets with a fair helping of betrayal and loss along the way, and her outlook and methods grow darker as the game progresses. The story will be portrayed through cel-animated movies and in-game cut scenes, taking stylistic cues from dark action thrillers and anime classics, such as *La Femme Nikita* and *Ghost in the Shell*.

*Oni* will support multiplayer, with levels that are smaller than the sprawling expanses that make up the single-player game.

Overall, there are enough fresh ideas in this game to make it stand out among the not-so-inconsiderable array of 3D actin titles that should be hitting the stores by the end of the year.

Picture: Blue-haired women kicking serious butt

Release Date: Winter 1999

hasn't shed any light on these dark areas, only given them new venues for their struggles. Sanctuary, a global virtual reality system that far outstrips the web, is now home for their activities. In the game you'll act as leader of one of the factions, and you'll use the Sanctuary interface to work your wiles. You'll issue orders to a variety of characters, but you'll never control them fully, they are independent workers and will (depending on their personalities, skills, or agendas, do as they wish. Assign them workers, soldiers, spies, and other specialists, then send them out into the world to acquire buildings, key cities, get a hold of special, shadowy artifacts, and generally work to extend your control of the world.

Picture: Who knows? It's so shadowy, even we don't get it

Release Date: Fall 1999

## BULLFROG

### Dungeon Keeper 2

Genre: Evil Real-time Strategy

The Pitch: A souped up take on the theme "evil is good," the game where you take charge of the dungeon of your dreams. The 3D graphics looks considerably better, the gameplay has been refined. Let's hope it's a bit less...boring. This time we learn that even the Reaper fears someone.

Picture: Put up or shut up time, Mr. Reaper

Release Date: Fall 1999

### Theme Park World

Genre: Strategy

The Pitch: The original amusement park game goes 3D. Once you've built a park you'll be able to move about it via a first person perspective. You'll also be able to jump onto one of your rides to try out yourself (nausea factor will be only partly simulated...). Another change from the original is the ability to design your own rides. Bullfrog, always known for its humor, isn't necessarily going for full realism here—you'll be able to build rides any insurance-respecting park operator would avoid like the plague, giving your rides dangerous things like crossovers and jumps. Rides include roller coasters, log flumes, go-karts, and more, for the more sedate park attendees you can build shops, sideshows, and kiosks. This is a business, so you'll need to manage your park, set entrance prices, configure the rides, and hire staff to work the park.

Picture: Polygonal vomit

Release Date: Winter 1999

# F-22 LIGHTNING 3™

## featuring

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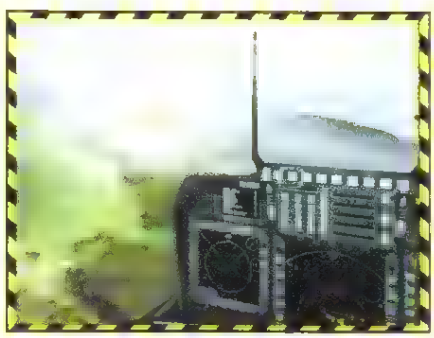
***Hazard suit not included**



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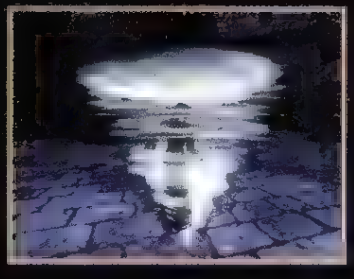

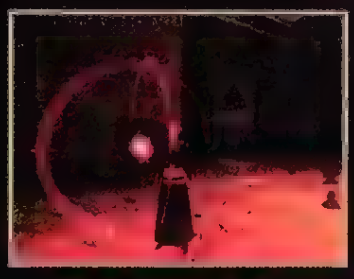

GT Interactive Software

PC CD ROM

TEEN T

LEGEND ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY

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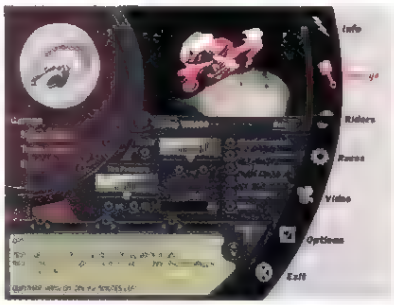

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with Stand-Alone PC Play

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MOTORSIMS

## CAVEDOG

### Amen: The Awakening

**Genre:** First-person Action
**The Pitch:** Between 2030 and 2050 AD about a third of the population begins to go insane. Violence and murder become rampant as a pandemic with no apparent cause creates beings known as "The Afflicted." You are thrown into the world during this mayhem, and you need to figure out what's up over the course of 17 acts set in realistic environments (including the Pittsburgh airport). Cavedog says the game is more story than action driven. Just about any object in the game can be picked up and equipped or converted to energy, which can then be used as ammo
**Picture:** A 3D shooter set in Pittsburgh? Bizarre
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Good & Evil

**Genre:** You name it
**The Pitch:** This game is still in development but has gone under wraps while Gilbert works some design issues. The game will combine the combat mode of strategy games, the puzzles of adventures and the character attachment of RPGs. Then again, what game doesn't?
**Picture:** *Good & Evil, Black & White, Black & White, Good & Evil*
Jma, Oprah
**Release Date:** 2000

### Total Annihilation: Kingdoms

**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** This follow-on to the (justifiably) highly-regarded actually takes us back in time ... waaaay back to the days of knights, dragons, and the like. Take the same gorgeous maps, plop down some amazing polygonal units, pit four unique sides against one another, stir, bake until brown
**Picture:** *Age of, like, Totally Annihilated Kingdoms*
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

## DYNAMIX

### Desert Fighters

**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** This sim focuses on a little-explored theater of the second World War—the deserts of North Africa. The game features a dynamic campaign and will feature 18 flyable aircraft, including the Ju-87 Stuka, the Italian Macchi MC 202, the French Dewoitine D 520 and the P-51 Mustang. For multi-positional aircraft (such as the Stuka) players can fly as either the pilot or tail gunner positions.
**Picture:** Saving the best for last?
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Pro Pilot 2000

**Genre:** Civilian Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** New planes include the Cessna Skyhawk C172R, The Beechcraft Bonanza V35, The Beechcraft Baron B58 and the Cessna CitationJet 525. Higher-resolution graphics, Glide and OpenGL support and lots of visual effects are the other main enhancements to this series
**Picture:** Flying the competitive skies
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### TRIBES 2

**Genre:** Online 3D Action
**The Pitch:** "*TRIBES 2* will be the online game of the millenium," says Dynamix' Jeff Tunnell. A number of cosmetic changes and additions are in the works, including the a new "official" Tribe called the BioDerms. The game will also feature five new worlds, one of which will be rendered using an entirely new terrain system. The addition of water will whet the appetites of players looking for some variation from *TRIBES*' otherwise dry maps. At least one new weapon will be added to the game's arsenal, and while specific details are not yet forthcoming, Dynamix promises that it will be "bigger and meaner with cooler explosions and effects than ever seen in TRIBES." A laudable goal, as any user of the Mortar will attest.
**Picture:** Lots of hype backed up thus far
**Release Date:** 2000

## EA SPORTS

### FIFA 2000

**Genre:** Soccer
**The Pitch:** Hah, that's a pun. (Get it? Soccer pitch... ah, never mind.) Better graphics, 42 classic teams from the past, expanded season play and updated rosters round up the features.
**Picture:** This game rules
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Madden NFL 2000

**Genre:** Football
**The Pitch:** Better graphics, new rosters, more moves, better control, blah blah blah. There's also a new All-Madden Millennium team.
**Picture:** Pow
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### NBA Live 2000

**Genre:** Basketball
**The Pitch:** Guess what? This game has better graphics, more moves, better control, blah blah blah. As if the game wasn't already creepy looking, now players will be synched to their post-dunk grunts and "yeans." Finally, last year's practice mode will be enhanced with the ability to go one-on-one against any NBA player in a game of street ball.
**Picture:** So real you'll hate the players for being overpaid and lazy
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### NHL 2000

**Genre:** Hockey
**The Pitch:** Better graphics, sound, AI, etc., plus a new career mode round out the new features
**Picture:** Ice, ice, baby
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Tiger Woods 2000

**Genre:** Golf
**The Pitch:** While the console version

of th s game goes more arcade-y the PC vers.on is more subdued The phys cs model is being reworked, and the game wil nclude a course ed tor. The new swing-meter will also be real-time
**Picture:** L nks, links, baby
**Release Date:** Fal 1999

## EIDOS INTERACTIVE

### Abomination
**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** You have to wonder about a game name that screams "review me using this word," but this RTS actually looks pretty good. Take your almost superhero-esque characters into env ronments and take out the al en menace The structure of the game is very much like *X-COM*, with randomized maps
**Picture:** *Lara-COM*
**Release Date:** 1999

### Anachronox
**Genre:** Role-playing
**The Pitch:** You may not be able to pronounce t, but don't et that stop you from read ng about it. This game asp res to involve the p ayer emot onally *a la* Japanese RPGs l ke *Final Fantasy*. We ll reserve judgment on the story unt l the game's done (thus far, they have the melodrama down), but the *Quake II*-powered visua s are sharp, and the 'n-combat camera system s rea ly slick. For those keeping score at home, this game drew much bigger crowds than *Daikatana*
**Picture:** *Final Quake Fantasy*
**Release Date:** 1999

### Braveheart
**Genre:** Rea -time Strategy
**The Pitch:** All gamers die, but not every gamer truly lives. W ll Red Lemon's real-time epic live up to ts big screen namesake? Th s ambitious game m xes real-time 3D battles with a fair y deep strategic evel where you contro the destiny of Scotland.
**Picture:** *Men in Skirts*
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Commandos 2
**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** Shown only on video, they swore up and down that what we were see ng was gamep ay. I so, this already visually stunning game has turned it up a notch entering the realm of "on dear that's impossibly good-look ng "
**Picture:** *Commandos & Conquer 2*
**Release Date:** 2000

### Cutthroats
**Genre:** P rate Strategy
**The Pitch:** Unl ke Sid Meier's *Pirates!*, this pirate game focuses more on tactical battles (both on land and at sea) rather than sword-play. As either a pirate or a privateer, players guide their sh ps around the Caribbean plundering hapless ships and v siting (or pil aging) over 70 different ports
**Picture:** Aargh, swab the deck, yadda yadda gener c pirate speak
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Daikatana
**Genre:** Eternally Delayed F rst-person Action
**The Pitch:** What can you possib y say about Ion Storm's flagship title? After a l of these years of development, the only th ng shown at E3 was deathmatch play What about the sing e-player game, where you'd have AI-control ed sidekicks? What about the advanced A ? The amazing diversity of monsters? Four-year old deathmatch is fun for a wh le, but c'mon guys, when are we gonna see the th ngs that make th s game unique?
**Picture:** Reviewers licking their chops
**Release Date:** 1999 (stop gigg ng)

### Deus Ex
**Genre:** Action Role play ng
**The Pitch:** Powered by the *Unreal* engine and led by industry veteran Warren Spector (who worked on some decent games like a bunch of *Ultima* games, both *Ultima Underworld* games, and most recently Looking G ass' *Thief*), *Deus Ex* is a a fascinating act on/role-playing hybrid. Will it live up to the standards of his prior cross-genre masterpieces?
**Picture:** t actually shipp ng some time in the next year
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver
**Genre:** Bloodsucking Action Role-playing
**The Pitch:** Kain banishes Razie , and now must journey from the underworld to Nosgoth to seek revenge You control h m in a full-freedom, 3D world w th real-time env ronments Raziel wi fight h s way forward and morph between planes of existence as he sucks sou s for nourishment along the way
**Picture:** Much (blood) suckage
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

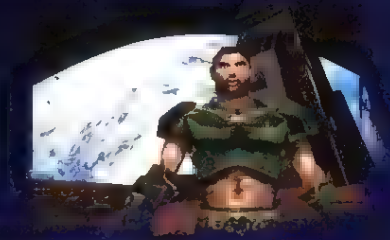
### Omikron: The Nomad Soul
**Genre:** Th rd-person French Act on Adventure
**The Pitch:** With the "desperately trying to appear relevant" Dav d Bowie doing the theme music, the game itself features prod gious 3D environments with, it is claimed, a larger p ay area and faster graphics than those found in *Tomb Raider* It al sounds really good unti you realize t's being done in France, which unfortunately in the past has meant jaw-dropping v sua s at the expense of gameplay. We shall see
**Picture:** *Voleur De Tombeau*
**Release Date:** W nter 1999

### Revenant
**Genre:** Act on Role playing
**The Pitch:** It has been several years since *Diablo* debuted on the act on/ro e-playing scene, but its inf uence can still be w tnessed in upcoming pro ects such as this W l this isometric slay-fest with 3D characters on *Baldur's Gate*-style backgrounds be more than another pretty clone?
**Picture:** *Diablo's Gate*
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Saboteur
**Genre:** Third-person N nja Action
**The Pitch:** Players take on the role of

# Unreal TOURNAMENT

- All-new and enhanced big body-count weaponry - the Redeemer, the IMPACT Hammer and more.



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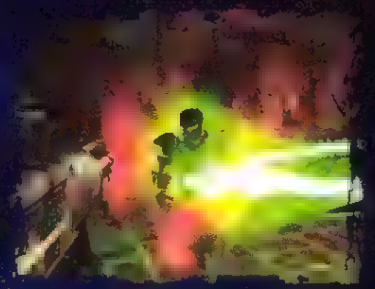
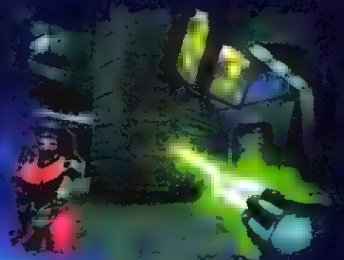
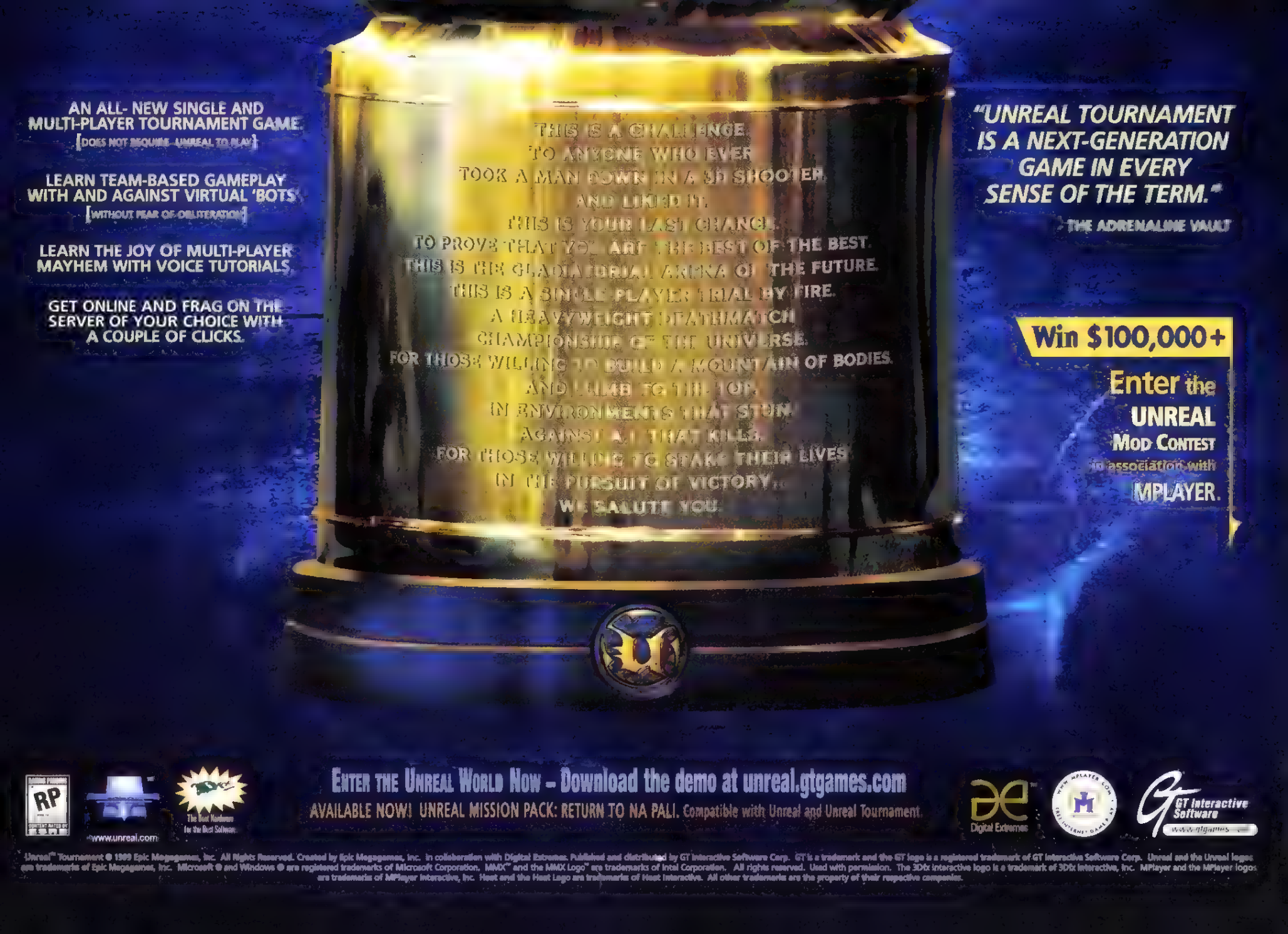


- Train for combat in Novice mode. Or go Hardcore for even more intense action.

- Over 30 unique environments torqued by the Unreal engine.



- Completely customizable "bots" with superior A.I. -"bots" take orders and team up with you.


AN ALL- NEW SINGLE AND MULTI-PLAYER TOURNAMENT GAME.
[DOES NOT REQUIRE UNREAL TO PLAY]
LEARN TEAM-BASED GAMEPLAY WITH AND AGAINST VIRTUAL 'BOTS
[WITHOUT FEAR OF OBLITERATION]
LEARN THE JOY OF MULTI-PLAYER MAYHEM WITH VOICE TUTORIALS.
GET ONLINE AND FRAG ON THE SERVER OF YOUR CHOICE WITH A COUPLE OF CLICKS.
THIS IS A CHALLENGE
TO ANYONE WHO EVER
TOOK A MAN DOWN IN A 3D SHOOTER
AND LIKED IT.
THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE.
TO PROVE THAT YOU ARE THE BEST OF THE BEST.
THIS IS THE GLADIATORIAL ARENA OF THE FUTURE.
THIS IS A SINGLE PLAYER TRIAL BY FIRE.
A HEAVYWEIGHT DEATHMATCH
CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE UNIVERSE.
FOR THOSE WILLING TO BUILD A MOUNTAIN OF BODIES
AND CLIMB TO THE TOP.
IN ENVIRONMENTS THAT STUN.
AGAINST A.I. THAT KILLS.
FOR THOSE WILLING TO STAKE THEIR LIVES
IN THE PURSUIT OF VICTORY...
WE SALUTE YOU.
"UNREAL TOURNAMENT IS A NEXT-GENERATION GAME IN EVERY SENSE OF THE TERM."
- THE ADRENALINE VAULT
Win $100,000+
Enter the UNREAL MOD CONTEST
in association with
MPLAYER.
www.unreal.com
The Best Hardware for the Best Software
ENTER THE UNREAL WORLD NOW - Download the demo at unreal.gtgames.com
AVAILABLE NOW! UNREAL MISSION PACK: RETURN TO NA PALI. Compatible with Unreal and Unreal Tournament.
Digital Extremes
GT Interactive Software
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# THEY WANT YOU DEAD.

Use the Heads-Up-Display and View Points Monitor to track the war around you.

You choose the target. Destroy entire buildings and rain rubble down on unsuspecting enemies!

Command your Lancemates to ward-off the enemy while Mobile Field Bases repair your 'Mech

36 weapons and a new targeting system let you pick away at enemy 'Mechs

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?
MECHWARRIOR 3
In the 31st Century, there is no mercy. Join the Inner Sphere's strike team as they prepare the annihilation of the deadly Smoke Jaguar Clan. You'll have over 20 missions, 18 fully customizable 'Mechs' to climb into, and enough weapons to flatten a mountain range. Not only is this the most immersive MechWarrior experience to date, but there's also an all-new target acquisition system, and more battle environments than ever before. But watch your back! This fight is for survival.
DOWNLOAD PLAYABLE DEMO
www.mechwarrior3.com
DO OR DIE!
In Stores Now!
TEEN
ESRB
Microsoft
ZIPPER INTERACTIVE
HASBRO Interactive
MICROPROSE
www.microprose.com

Shin, a ninja warrior tasked with rescuing his sister from the evil CyberGen Company. Aiding him in his quest is Shiro, a large canine sidekick who brings Shin his enemies' slippers (feet still inside, of course). On the technical side, the game will feature motion-captured characters capable of using a variety of weapons, moves and vehicles such as a Kawasaki motorcycle. The game's 20 levels will apparently offer elements of exploration and puzzle solving in addition to combat, and will feature locales ranging from office buildings to lunar bases (apparently modern ninjas really get around).
**Picture:** *Ninja Raider*
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Thief 2: The Metal Age
**Genre:** Sneaky 3D Action
**The Pitch:** In this sequel to the critically acclaimed original, players return as Garrett, the uber-thief, as he takes on another sneaky adventure. Expect an all-new story, technological improvements, better effects, yadda yadda yadda
**Picture:** A great game gets better
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Urban Chaos
**Genre:** Third-person Action
**The Pitch:** Players take control of either or both of two police protagonists—the agile and street-savvy Darci or the slower but more experienced Roper (no relation to the landlord from "Three's Company") and take to the streets. The game offers some impressive visual effects such as volumetric fog, bump and reflective mapping, shadows, fog, rain, snow, etc. Darci and Roper can interact with over 40 non-player characters over the course of the game, as well as ride on a number of vehicles such as motorcycles and hang-gliders.
**Picture:** A good looking game buried by splashier competitors
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

## ELECTRONIC ARTS

### Need for Speed: High Stakes
**Genre:** Gorgeous Racing
**The Pitch:** The big twist this time out is that you can purchase cars and wager them in the High Stakes racing mode. Win a contest and you'll reap the benefits: you'll get to add the loser's car to your coterie of saved cars. Another big change is the addition of damage visuals to your car models, so you'll finally be able to get the satisfaction of seeing an opponent crumple that Ferrari 550 Maranello. And speaking of cars, EA says there will be 19 in the game, including the Aston Martin DB7, BMW Z3, Lamborghini Diablo SV, Jaguar XKR, Porsche 911 and some good ol' Detroit steel in the form of the Camaro Z28, Corvette C5 and Pontiac Firebird.
**Picture:** More embarrassingly bad adjectives being used to describe this game's graphics
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Shogun: Total War
**Genre:** Strategy
**The Pitch:** This historic real-time and turn-based strategy game set in Japan. It features large-scale real-time 3D battles mixed with an almost *Risk*-like strategic wrapper
**Picture:** *Braveheart* in Japan
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

## EMPIRE

### Enemy Engaged: Comanche Hokum
**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** As with *Apache Havoc*, you'll get a Western and a Russian helicopter to play with, and missions and campaigns to match their skills. Also, you'll be able to integrate the game with the earlier title for multiplayer match-ups and cooperative hunter-killer missions.
**Picture:** How about a racing game Ford-Toyota?
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### MiG Alley
**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** While the game covers the entire Korean war, it focuses on the Chinese Spring Offensive of 1951. In single player mode you'll fly for the UN only, taking off in either the F-51D Mustang, the F-80C Shooting Star, the F-84E Thunder Jet, or one of three F-86 Sabre variants (A, E, or F)—which craft you fly in will depend on the time period and the missions involved.
**Picture:** Flying and fighting in the Forgotten War
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Motor Racing
**Genre:** Motor Racing (duh)
**The Pitch:** This is the working title of a game that'll allow you to choose between 12 cars and race them on both the tracks and in the parking lots of the world's finest racetracks. The most important feature—your brakes will glow.
**Picture:** A kinder, gentler *Carmageddon*
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Pro Pinball: Fantastic!
**Genre:** Pinball
**The Pitch:** The latest of the brilliant line of pinball games takes you back in time with a new steam-technology based table. Features up to ten balls in play at the same time and four flippers.
**Picture:** It's pinball-riffic!
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Sheep
**Genre:** Real-time Herding
**The Pitch:** Guide the lovable but stupid sheep through 16 levels, keeping them from being bashed, boiled, blown up and/or blow dried. There are five different breeds, and something sure to put the fear of God into players throughout the world, evil cows.
**Picture:** Baaahhha puns
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

Alien Resurrection | Planet of the Apes | Croc 2

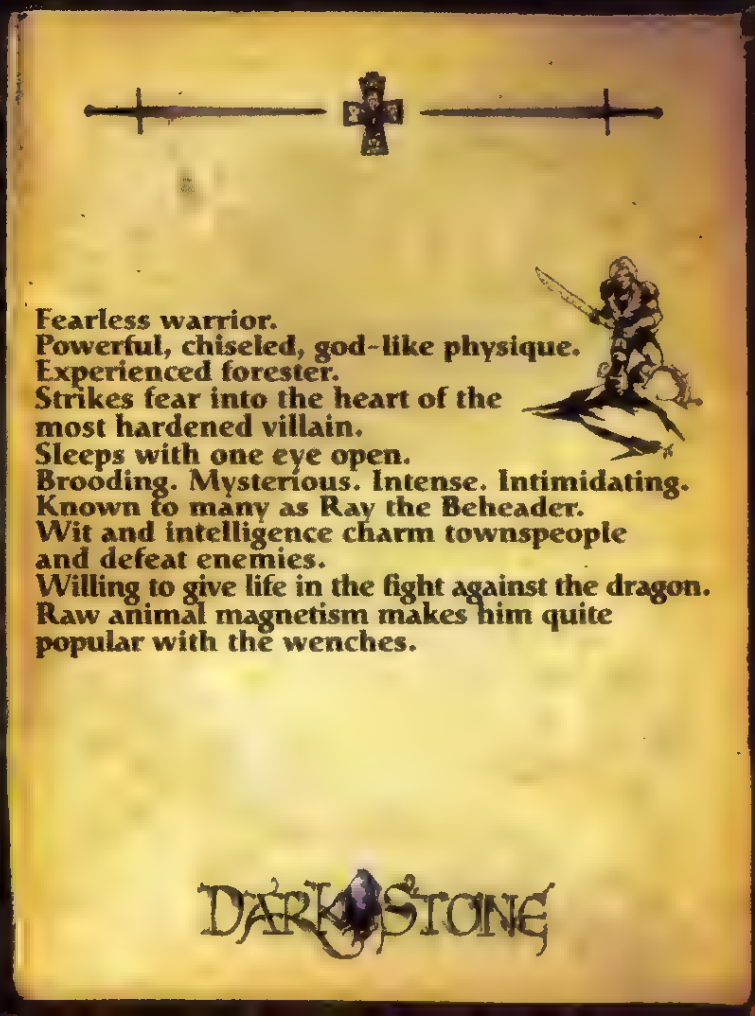
**Stars! Supernova**
**Genre:** Space Strategy
**The Pitch:** A modern follow-on to the classic space empire building game *Stars!* Empire Interactive is still keeping *Supernova* under wraps. More when we know more.
**Picture:** *Stars!* goes supernova.
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

**Wargamer: Napoleon 1813**
**Genre:** Wargame
**The Pitch:** An innovative looking mixed-scale wargame at one level you control the armies of France and once battles are joined the view switches to a tactical level, and the game clock drops into real time. Things are still happening at the operational/strategic level as orders are issued to the area of the battle field before the battle. Reinforcements arrive as reinforcements during the battle.
**Picture:** *Sergeant Sharpe Conquers Europe.*
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## FOX INTERACTIVE

**Alien Resurrection**
**Genre:** First-person Action
**The Pitch:** Players will have an opportunity to roam the decks of the research vessel Auriga as any of five different characters from the movie. As if the aliens were not bad enough, the ship is also infested with seven Ripley clones that must be located and destroyed. The game's ten levels will feature a mix of action and puzzle-solving (not necessarily in equal portions) as the player attempts to stop the psychotic Dr. Wren from returning alien specimens to Earth.
**Picture:** Why make a game based on a movie few people actually liked?
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

**Croc 2**
**Genre:** 3D Platform-y Action
**The Pitch:** The quirky Croc is on a quest to find his parents and aware that his archenemy Baron Dante has been magically resurrected by his evil Dantinis. The Baron will attempt to thwart Croc's journey through 40 levels.
**Picture:** Raise your hand if you bought the original.
**Release Date:** Winter 1999


Fearless warrior.
Powerful, chiseled, god-like physique.
Experienced forester.
Strikes fear into the heart of the most hardened villain.
Sleeps with one eye open.
Brooding. Mysterious. Intense. Intimidating.
Known to many as Ray the Beheader.
Wit and intelligence charm townspeople and defeat enemies.
Willing to give life in the fight against the dragon.
Raw animal magnetism makes him quite popular with the wenches.
DARKSTONE

### Die Hard Trilogy 2
**Genre:** John McClane is at it again, this time on the Las Vegas strip
**The Pitch:** High-tech terrorists are bent reducing Nevada's sin city into a pile of dust, and only McClane can stop them. The game will split the action into three separate "mini-games," each with its own goals and style of action.
**Picture:** Raise your hand if you bought the original..
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### NBA Championship 2000
**Genre:** Basketball
**The Pitch:** Known last year as *ESPN NBA Tonight*, the game features include authentic player moves, adjustable coaching strategies, eight-player multiplayer support, and multiple difficulty levels
**Picture:** Tim Duncan is the best player in the NBA
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### NHL Championship 2000
**Genre:** Hockey
**The Pitch:** Formerly known as *ESPN National Hockey Night*, this is the latest version of the critically lauded *NHL PowerPlay*. The game will ship with a full player editor/creator, trading, multiplayer, fights, etc
**Picture:** Thugs on ice
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Planet of the Apes
**Genre:** Third-person Ape Adventure
**The Pitch:** Players takes on the role of Ulysses, sole human survivor on a planet that has witnessed a cruel turn of evolution— humans are at the bottom of the food chain, while apes are the undisputed masters of their world. You'll apparently encounter a variety of action and adventure elements while guiding Ulysses through the game's 15 levels
**Picture:** Without Charlton Heston's overacting, what's the point?
**Release Date:** 2000

## GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS

### Age of Wonders
**Genre:** Turn-based Strategy
**The Pitch:** This anachronistic game features 12 unique races, over 50 different heroes with individual personalities and abilities, numerous special items, and myriad of locations to explore. The goal of the game is to raise and lead an army towards a battle that determines the fate of the world. During the journey through many realms and landscapes, players will make alliances, gather heroes, and find magical artifacts. Players can employ strategic and tactical skills to command troops in capturing vital locations and defeating enemies in a variety of scenarios
**Picture:** *Warlords of Might and Magic*
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Darkstone
**Genre:** Action Role-playing
**The Pitch:** Travel through this 3D environment controlling two characters as you attempt to defeat the Big D, which this time around is not Diablo, but an evil dragon known as Drakk. Beautifully detailed characters are done in a whimsical anime style, and there are eight of them to choose from. Each new game uses a quest generator to randomly place treasure and quests (of which tens of thousands are possible) with over 30 levels per quest, and over 80 types of monsters, including killer bees
**Picture:** "I wanna be like *Diablo*"
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Fly!
**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**Picture:** Aiming squarely (and based on early betas hitting on most counts) at the genre dominated by Microsoft's *Flight Simulator*, *Fly!* looks to offer more features than the current king. Fly lots of civilian planes, land them, go sight seeing, plan flights... but where's the shooting?
**Picture:** Frazzled nerves in Redmond
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Grand Theft Auto 2
**Genre:** Foul-mouthed Action
**The Pitch:** This follow-on to last year's bad boy game of violent auto theft, car chases and general urban chaos aims to continue the trend. New features include more SWAT teams and a more complex and dynamic city environment.
**Picture:** For the love of Mike Wilson, give us a mid-level save
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### KISS Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child
**Genre:** Dinosaur Band 3D Action
**The Pitch:** You start this game as a mortal but being to acquire the powers of The Elder, a supernatural being with four alter egos based on the KISS characters. the demon, the Starbearer, the Beast King and the Celestial. Your job? Fight the spawn of the evil Nightmare Child and prevent him/her/it from destroying the universe. The game, which uses the LithTech engine, will have "combat-heavy environments," each based around the flavor of a particular KISS character. Oh, yeah—expect loud music, too
**Picture:** "I wanna *Doom* and *Quake* all night, and sleep every day "
**Release Date:** 2000

### Max Payne
**Genre:** Third-person John Woo-esque Action
**The Pitch:** A grizzled cop, his family murdered and now on the run after being framed for the execution of his boss. He wears a trenchcoat and runs around town gunning down bad guys in slow-motion, with lots of graphic violence. Not shown in anything but video form for perhaps obvious reasons
**Picture:** More screams of bad taste in light of recent events

**Release Date:** 2000

### Nocturne

**Genre:** Horror-f c Th rd-person Action

**The Pitch:** You o n a team hunt ng ev l n tn s 30s-l ke pu p adven ture You pass through many ands and wor ds in your quest to r d the wor d of these dark crea- tures Monsters include zomb es qnou s vamp res, and werewo ves the rest they eave us to be sur pr sed by Requ res a 32 bit capa- ble card for 3D accelerat on, so Voodoo owners will nave to make do w th a software renderer

**Picture:** *Alone in the 3D Acce erated Dark*

**Release Date:** Fall 1999

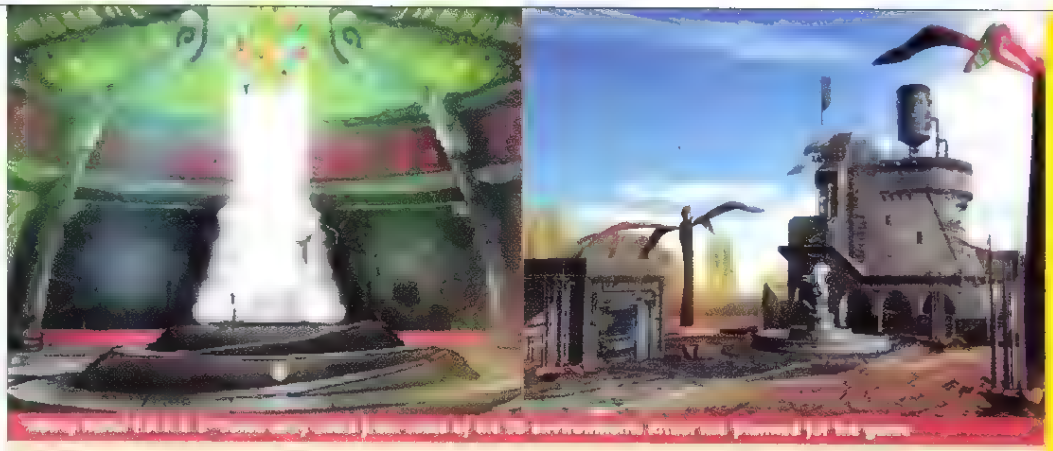
### Rune

**Genre:** First-person Viking Action

**The Pitch:** Based on Nord c my thology and ut l z ng a mod fied vers on of the *Unrea* eng ne you take on the ro e (but nope fu y not sme y n des) of a young Viking tough err warrior named Ragnar Your people are be ng massacred, and t's up to you to put a stop to it (mas- sacring a bunch of Nordic nasties along the way)

**Picture:** *Unrealnarok*

**Release Date:** 2000



## It's your one-way ticket to midnight

### Heavy Metal F.A.K.K.2

**Publisher** Gathering of Developers

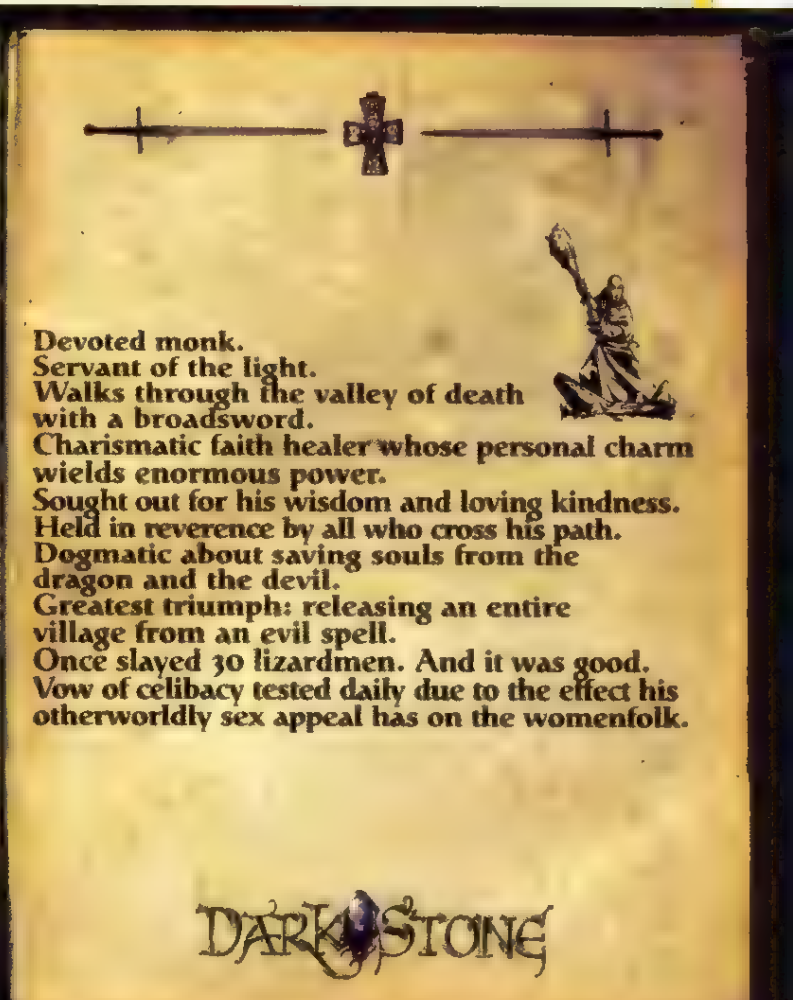
**Genre** 3D Adolescent Action

**The Pitch** *Heavy Metal* magazine has been a refuge for adult-oriented comics and graphic novels for years, and the movie was a showcase for modern animation when it was first released in 1981. Now that a sequel is in the works (die to be released this summer), a game based on the license seems like a natural idea. Concepts and settings from the movie run the gamut from bizarre to absurd to downright disturbing, and they make for great game environments.

*Heavy Metal F.A.K.K.2* is being developed by Ritual Entertainment (the makers of *Sin*). The game will be a shooter (views alternate between first and third person), one of the first to license the impressive *Quake III* engine. Ritual is determined to avoid making the same mistakes evident in the initial release of *Sin*—a host of bugs and broken features that might have been avoided by a bit of extra testing. Apparently G.O.D. is granting Ritual a large measure of control over the production schedule of the game, a concession that will hopefully allow them to make sure that *Heavy Metal F.A.K.K.2* works properly before it hits the stores. They have exercised that autonomy to some extent already—although they had originally hoped to time the release of the game to coincide with the release of the movie, the of which has been pushed back to sometime in the year 2000. Hopefully the game will benefit from the extra time in the shop; it will, at any rate, give fans some extra time to blow the dust off their collection of Devo cassettes....

**Picture** Huh huh, I like, uh, saw a nipple

**Release Date** 2000


Devoted monk.
Servant of the light.
Walks through the valley of death with a broadsword.
Charismatic faith healer whose personal charm wields enormous power.
Sought out for his wisdom and loving kindness.
Held in reverence by all who cross his path.
Dogmatic about saving souls from the dragon and the devil.
Greatest triumph: releasing an entire village from an evil spell.
Once slayed 30 lizardmen. And it was good.
Vow of celibacy tested daily due to the effect his otherworldly sex appeal has on the womenfolk.
DARKSTONE

Wheel of Time—Combining

# Big Wheel keep on turning

## Wheel of Time

Publisher: GT Interactive
Genre: Action Adventure
The Pitch: Designer/producer Glen Dahlgren of Legend Entertainment makes it very clear from the start that his project based on Robert Jordan's epic series of novels is not a role-playing game. It is, Dahlgren explains, a mix of action and strategy that immerses itself in the voluminous source material with the aim of capturing the feel of Jordan's world.

Despite the fact that the game is built on the *Unreal* engine, the artists at Legend have taken the code to a new aesthetic level. The environments feel like real places, largely thanks to the architects that Legend has hired to flesh out the basic gameplay layouts handed down by the level designers. A lot of Legend's art staff is versed in the adventure genre, and the beneficial result is that the quality of the demo's environments is comparable to the detailed still art common to those types of games.

The single-player game will feature an Aes Sedai named Elayna as the main character, and will feature a linear story that pits the player against both minions of the Dark One and creatures of Shadar Logoth in a race to recover the seals that bind the Dark One in his prison. Much of the action will be focused on using ter'angreal (magical artifacts) to summon the One Power and cast spells at opponents.

Legend has created an interesting spell system to increase the variety of tactical options. In addition to the standard fire-and-forget spells, "Seeking spells" create balls of energy that move at various speeds (the more powerful the spell's effect, the slower the spell moves) in pursuit of the spell's target. Seeking spells can generally be countered by other spell effects (assuming the target has the appropriate ter'angreal), and the resulting exchange of spells and counterspells is designed to capture the dynamic of card games such as *Magic: The Gathering*. Over 40 ter'angreal will be present in the final game.

The single-player story culminates in the "citadel" version of the multiplayer game. In citadel mode, players compete each other in a version of "capture the flag" that uses the seals from the Dark One's prison as flags. A player must collect all four of the seals represented in the game and return with them to that player's home citadel. Up to four players can participate in this mode, and each one starts with their own citadel and their own seal. The catch is that each player can only carry one seal at a time, and they must find ways to protect their "stash" of seals in their citadel from other players.

Before the game begins, each player will be able to use a simple editor to place traps and troops within their home citadel in whatever manner they want. They can also hide their seal (as well as any captured seals) anywhere in the citadel. The number of traps and troops available to each player varies based on the level in question, and while it is possible to pile everything in one room, Dahlgren recommends against it. "There are ter'angreal that affect everything within a room," he explains, "and this sort of strategy will also make the location of your seals blatantly obvious to your enemies." Players will be able to save favorite citadel configurations and call them up when they join a game, thus shortening the amount of preparation time required to start the action.

Currently the game is on track for an early fall release, and the demo looks fairly polished in terms of gameplay. *The Wheel of Time* may not be the next role-playing epic, but if the final version is as compelling as what the team had to show at E3, at least it will be fun.

Picture: May be as big as one of Jordan's weighty tomes...
Release Date: Fall 1999

## GT INTERACTIVE

### 1602 A.D.

Genre: Strategy
The Pitch: Released as *Anno 1602AD* in Europe, the game blends typical "build colony" type strategy with real-time battles, set across the backdrop of early New World exploration. The single-player game consists of seven campaigns and over 40 scenarios. The game will include an editor to let you build new worlds for either single or multiplayer modes.
Picture: *Civilization & Settlers & Conquer*
Release Date: Fall 1999

### Driver

Genre: Smash 'em Up Racing
The Pitch: As undercover cop Tanner, players pose as a driver-for-hire in order to infiltrate a powerful crime ring spanning four of the nation's largest cities—New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Miami. In other words, your job is to drive the getaway car, avoiding cops, through four real-world cities. Drive a mix of popular 70's muscle cars, with a legendary realistic physics and damage modeling. From the fine folks who brought you the endlessly enjoyable *Destruction Derby* games
Picture: *Gone in 60 Seconds 3D*
Release Date: Fall 1999

### Imperium Galactica 2

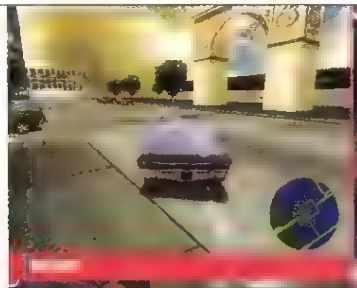
Genre: Space-y Strategy
The Pitch: Players play one of three races—human, brutal, or political—in this futuristic strategy game. Design your own fleet, build and defend colonies, and use espionage to discover your enemies' secrets. He who gets the four data crystals first wins!
Picture: Bovines in space
Release Date: Summer 1999

### Team Alligator

Genre: Flight Simulation
The Pitch: *Team Apache* developer Simis is producing a semi-sequel based on the Russian Ka-52 Alligator. Players take on the role of a Russian pilot in both the Russo-Belarusin War and the Tajikistan Conflict. The emphasis will be on group formations and joint actions, giving the game a slightly different feel from other sims.
Picture: Don't shoot your wingman
Release Date: Fall 1999

### Unreal Mission Pack: Return to Na Pali

Genre: 3D Action Add-on
The Pitch: You're picked up be a salvage ship, the UMS Bodega Bay, which is on a mission to recover weapons research logs from the ship Prometheus, which has crash



Monopoly II

landed on Na Pa t Yo have but two cho ces volunteer to go down and retr eve the logs and be granted a fu pardon or return to be ng a pr soner for the rest of your days Expect new weapons, new enem es and 20 new eve s of gor geous act on
**Picture.** Work ng mu tip ayer
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Unreal Tournament
**Genre:** (Most v) On ne 3D Action
**The Pitch** P ay one of f ve teatn match var ants aga.nst computer contro ed opponents or take your sk s on ne The weapons have (f na y) been t.ned for max m.m carnage and a leged y the net work code w make t playab e on a 56K mo tem
**Picture:** A race to relea se before *Quake Arena*
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

## HASBRO INTERACTIVE

### Clue Chronicles
**Genre.** Adventure
**The Pitch.** Th s s a c assic adventure game in the fami ar C ue sett ng You encounter fami ar elements from the board game, including p aces n the mans on and characters ke Co one Mustard or M ss Scar et s ng adventure ke techniques of exp orat on character nter action, and puzz e so v ng, you l work to solve the mystery of 'whodun t'
**Picture:** Co one Mustard and M ss Scar et, s tt ng in a tree
**Release Date:** Fal 1999

### Missile Command Classic
**Genre:** Retro Action
**The Pitch:** The Cold War class c rein- vented for attent on-span defic ent kids The game now explodes n 3D. wn ch sounds pa nfu
**Picture:** Where are the cheap knock-off vers ons?
**Release Date:** Fa 1999

### Monopoly II
**Genre:** Boardgame Fun
**The Pitch:** Westwood Studios d d the prev ous one and th s ups the eye candy and a ows you to add your own town or neighborhood and get creat ve w th the rules of the game
**Picture:** *Monopo.y Ska Row Ea.tion?*
**Release Date:** Fa 1999

Pete:
Ravishing sorceress.
36-22-34.
Intuitive, intelligent, and deadly.
Perfect physical specimen.
Legs inspire lust in knights, rogues, and warriors.
Uses powers for good, not evil.
Rebukes all suitors.
Harnesses magic energy through communion.
Will morph into a werewolf if provoked.
Interests include decoding secret messages and experimenting with arcane spells.
Meditation promotes luminous complexion.
Maintains girlish figure with daily swordplay.
DARKSTONE
www.godgames.com
© 1998 Gathering of Developers.

### Pong
**Genre:** Retro Action
**The Pitch:** Expect 20 levels of *Pong*-rrific action, 3D graphics, different paddles (hopefully licensed from major *Pong* vendors), power-ups, lens flare. Who could ask for more?
**Picture:** They're joking, right?
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Q*Bert
**Genre:** Retro Action
**The Pitch:** It's the eternal existential dilemma—you're faced with an endless series of blocks, so you must convert them before the man tramples you down. Just like real life
**Picture:** No, seriously, they're joking, right?
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Scrabble
**Genre:** Boardgame Fun
**The Pitch:** Break out your dictionary for words with Q, X and Z and Hasbro dusts off this mighty franchise for another digital run
**Picture:** It's quaxzorriffic! (Triple word score.)
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### The Next Tetris
**Genre:** Retro Action
**The Pitch:** If *Pong* can make a comeback, why not *Tetris*? In addition to a "Classic" version, there will be cascades, time trials, and a multiplayer ranking system
**Picture:** Ch-ching
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Trivial Pursuit—Millennium Edition
**Genre:** Boardgame Fun
**The Pitch:** Containing "a millennium's worth of general-knowledge trivia," this latest in the long line of accumulated-knowledge-of-the-world games will sport three variations on the well-known theme: Classic Pursuit, Party Pursuit and Point Pursuit
**Picture:** At midnight on Dec. 31, it formats your hard drive (a joke.)
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## IMAGIC GAMES

### Flash Point
**Genre:** Army Action
**The Pitch:** At press time, Interactive Magic announced that they've sold their games to Jb Soft, so the status of any and all of these titles is in question. As for *Flash Point*, you start the game as just an infantryman trying to survive on a hostile battlefield where even tanks find the going tough. As you work through the missions you start to get access to real-world vehicles from both sides: BMP-1 Infantry Fighting Vehicles, A-10 attack planes, M60A3 and T-72 tanks, and even jeeps and trucks. Eventually you get to command other forces
**Picture:** *Wargasm* on Ritalin
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Monopolization
**Genre:** Business Strategy
**The Pitch:** In essence a sequel to the highly regarded *Entrepreneur*, players build a product and try to sell it to enough of the territories on the map to beat out their competitors
**Picture:** *Entreprapitalism*
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Red Fury
**Genre:** Liquid Action
**The Pitch:** Pilot hydrocrafts on the mighty waters (?) of Mars and blow each other up in this multiplayer game. It's fully buzzword compliant, sporting impressive water effects, specular highlighting, volumetric lighting, real-time progressive mesh line of distance, particle sprays and bump mapping
**Picture:** Rub a dub dub
**Release Date:** 2000

### Road to Moscow
**Genre:** Wargame
**The Pitch:** You're the overall commanding officer of either the Axis or the Soviet forces during the German invasion of Russia in WWII. You don't manipulate individual units; instead, you develop strategic operations, with primary and secondary objectives, selecting which forces will participate, then send them into action
**Picture:** *Rayman* in WWI.
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

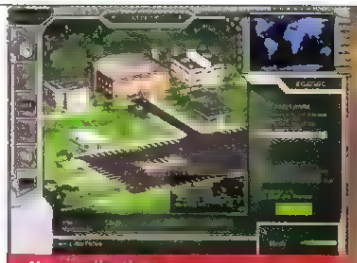
### Seven Kingdoms II
**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** Take charge of a quasi-historical kingdoms and try to conquer the world. New to the sequel will be the ability to play as monsters (Frythans!) and employ powerful and distinctive heroes. Also, a random campaign generator is being included, as are four additional cultures (Carthagenian, Roman, Indian and Celtic) and expanded espionage capabilities.
**Picture:** Released around the same time as *Age of Empires II* or *Total Annihilation Kingdoms*, it gets buried again...
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Shadow Company
**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** You're a mercenary-for-hire and you take on a bunch of missions killing many people along the way. Throw in some minor role-playing elements, lots of pre-mission planning, and some sharp 3D graphics and you have an interesting-looking game
**Picture:** *Jagged Commandos Alliance*
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

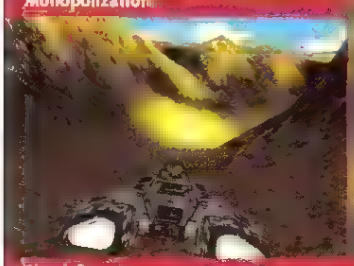
### Wall Street Tycoon
**Genre:** Business Strategy
**The Pitch:** You play the market, pure and simple. Historical Missions cover various periods throughout the history of securities trading. Simulated Missions are randomly generated and Internet Missions use real-world data
**Picture:** A game for accountants
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## INFOGRAMES

### LeMans 24 Hours
**Genre:** Racing
**The Pitch:** The LeMans course has



Monopolization



Shock Force

Outcast

F/A-18E Super Hornet

been modeled in 3D, which they claim comes within one inch of actual course specifications. Retrogressive and collision damage simulate the wear and tear that occurs over the 24 hour race.
**Picture:** Some guy who'll run the full 24 hour—without bathroom breaks.
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Mission: Impossible

**Genre:** 3D Action
**The Pitch:** First appearing on the Nintendo 64, it now has a CD quality soundtrack, new levels, new menu design and sampled speech. Players once again take on the role of Ethan Hunt and utilize classic Impossible Mission Force (IMF) weaponry and gadgets throughout the adventures, which place an emphasis on strategy and cunning, rather than violent rampages.
**Picture:** Sales. Unlikely.
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

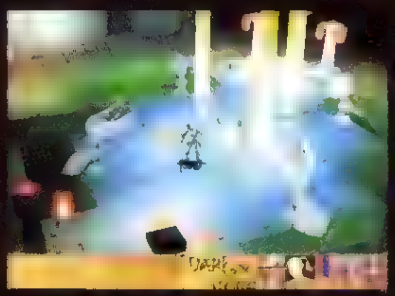
### Outcast

**Genre:** Voxel-ly Action Adventure
**The Pitch:** Sporting a fancy 3D engine that combines polygon characters and beautiful voxel landscapes, this game takes players to an alien world where they play the role of Cutter, an ex-Navy Seal who must find the rest of your missing exploration team and get back home. The most interesting feature in the game is a sort of "virtual world" where the inhabitants go about their daily schedules and live their lives all around you, independent of your actions. The aliens react to the reputation you earn by the actions you take.
**Picture:** Screams for 3D acceleration drowning out praise for innovative gameplay.
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

## INTERACTIVE MAGIC

### Shock Force

**Genre:** Online Action
**The Pitch:** You and up to 63 other players battle each other from inside armored hovertanks. You split into two sides, and needs to work together to try to take control of the other side's bases. You can also drop a variety of other units on the battlefield, including energy units, repair stations, gun emplacements and more.
**Picture:** Kill your friends for fun.
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

•Fully 3-D characters and environment

•Simultaneous control of 2 characters

•Random Quest Generator ensures maximum playability

•Manual camera control allows you to rotate 360 degrees and zoom in and out

•100 different enemies based on 30 different characters

•22 weapons and 32 spells

•Supports multi player mode

Developed by Delphine Software Inc.

Bid farewell to your former self.

Enter the world of Darkstone and leave your identity at the door. Surviving this medieval world, living under the shadow of a nefarious dragon, will require nothing less than a complete transformation. As a knight, monk, thief, or sorcerer, you will creep through dungeons, explore towns and wilderness, and slay armies of nasty enemies on your quest to collect the seven orbs that can defeat your firebreathing nemesis. Look deep inside yourself. Is there a dragon slayer within?

DARKSTONE

# FIND THE TRUTH.

**In the remote French village of Rennes-le-Château centuries of questions culminate in one frightening moment in time.**

**NOW.**

**MARCH 12, 1295. CAMPAGNE SUR AUDE.**
The Knights Templar build a lookout post [illegible] summit of Bezu. For years, these elite soldiers of God stand guard over an unknown [illegible].

**JUNE 28, 1972. TOUSSAINT'S TOMB.**
[illegible] second tomb—identical to the one in Poussin's 1641 Les Bergers d'Arcadie—is discovered near Arques. The tomb is said to hold the mysteries of God.

**TODAY. RENNES-LE-CHÂTEAU.**
Gabriel and Grace follow a stolen child to this small French village. The riddles and mysteries they will encounter guard the most tightly held secret of all time.

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Blood of the Sacred
# GABRIEL KNIGHT 3
Blood of the Damned
A 3D MYSTERY ADVENTURE

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# RISK YOUR SOUL.

**AUGUST 2, 1940. PAS DU LOUP**
Adolf Hitler dispatches a small division of soldiers and archaeologists to search for a "treasure of immense wealth" said to be hidden within the valley. The project is soon abandoned.

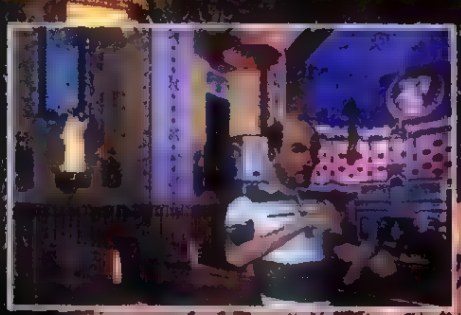
**MARCH 17, 1244. MONTSEGUR**
A mysterious treasure is smuggled out of the Cathar fortress of Montsegur. Two days later the remaining "heretics" are slaughtered by the crusaders of Pope Innocent III.

**JUNE 1, 1885. ST. MARY MAGDALENE'S**
The [illegible] parish priest, Bérenger Saunière. With [illegible] the abbey, he makes [illegible] in a hollow column. Soon after, Saunière has wealth enough to refurbish the entire village.

**JANUARY 22, 1922. VILLA BETHANIA**
After hearing his final confession, a neighboring priest rushes from Saunière's deathbed, refusing to administer last rites. Never sharing what transpired, he was said to have lived the rest of his life in torment.

Solve a true, historical mystery within a surreal, captivating story line.

Control your point of view using unlimited camera movement.

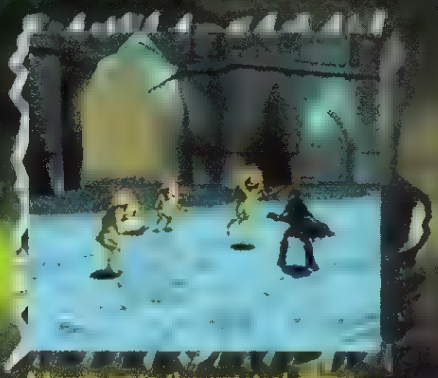


Navigate stunning, real-time rendered 3D environments.

# DESTROYING YOUR ENEMIES ISN'T ENOUGH...

"The elaborate architecture within these 3D environments is some of the best Next Generation has seen on the PlayStation."
–Next Generation

**As Raziel, stalk the shadows of** Nosgoth hunting your vampire brethren. Impale them with spears. Incinerate them with torches. Drown them in water. **No matter how you destroy** them, you must feed on their souls to sustain your quest – the ruin of your creator, Kain.



Morph into the spectral plane and confront unique enemies and gameplay challenges

- Shift real-time between the material and spectral planes
- Dark gothic story

"...the completely revamped sequel to Legacy of Kain promises high immersion factor."
–Spin

PlayStation

T TEEN

PC CD ROM

...YOU MUST
DEVOUR THEIR SOULS
LEGACY of KAIN
SOUL REAVER
CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
EIDOS

# INTERPLAY

## Descent: Freespace 2

**Genre:** Space Simulation
**The Pitch:** Set 32 years after the previous game, this action-heavy spaceflight sim will re-acquaint previous players with their old nemeses, the Shivans. With new ships to pilot and nebulas to hide in, individuals and groups alike will dogfight through the unconstrained vastness of space. And for those who have always wished to fight a desperate battle against incredible odds, the largest of the new destroyers dwarfs the previous game's top juggernaut by nearly a factor of ten. Hope you haven't spent too much time planning your retirement
**Picture:** Lots of stuff to blow up
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

## F/A-18E Super Hornet

**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** From Digital Integration comes the second F/A-18 game of the year. The combat zones include the Barents Sea and Indian Ocean, and the game will support 32 players in multiplayer
**Picture:** The F/A-18 is this year's F-22
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## Giants: Citizen Kabuto

**Genre:** Wacky 3D Action
**The Pitch:** In most games, scale is not really an issue. Either you play a human-sized lifeform fighting other human-sized lifeforms, a titan fighting other titans or a picayune David with a serious Goliath problem. In this game, the developers at Planet Moon plan a world where scale is more than just the issue—it's one-third of the fun. Three very different races will vie for control of a single planet, and as one of these races is ten times the size of the others and composed of a only a single individual, you can imagine how interesting the multiplayer matches should be
**Picture:** Size does matter
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## Kingpin: Life of Crime

**Genre:** 3D Motherf#@%ing Action
**The Pitch:** Not shown on the floor to avoid the mainstream press literally looking for blood in the wake of the tragedy in Littleton, Colorado, this is what you get when you mix *Quake II* with hip-hop music and a lot of swearing. It's trying a bit too hard to be gangsta, and it plays out a bit like a suburban fantasy of how cool it would be to be a thug, but the gameplay of the demo is solid enough to make it worth keeping an eye out for. Should prove popular with the teenage set, unfortunately
**Picture:** Government hearings
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## Klingon Academy

**Genre:** Mean-tempered Space Simulation
**The Pitch:** The Klingons—they're tough, gruff, guttural and aggressive. What better reasons to want to play one? Players will take on the role of a new recruit at General Chang's Elite Command Academy, training diligently to someday take on the hated Federation of Planets. Of course, they'll first have to learn how to pilot all of the Empire's (extremely cool) warships, in an extensive 3D action/sim campaign which will comprise some 30 missions. Only the best will survive—as it should be
**Picture:** Aaarrrgggnnh
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## MDK 2

**Genre:** Wacky 3D Action
**The Pitch:** The original could only be described as "twisted and violent, but in a fun kind of way," and the sequel, developed by BioWare (of *Baldur's Gate* fame) should add the phrase "only more so." Players return to this strange world and its even stranger inhabitants. The game will allow players to control Kurt (the protagonist from the first game), Max and Dr. Hawkins in an effort to fend off alien attack. Each character has a unique set of powers and weapons. Kurt focuses mainly on stealth, using sniper mode and a powerful ribbon chute. Dr. Hawkins has the ability to create new items. And Max the dog? Well, he simply loves a devastating frontal assault
**Picture:** Every dog has it's 3D accelerated day
**Release Date:** 2000

## Messiah

**Genre:** 3D Holy Action
**The Pitch:** Outlandish 3D characters, adult humor and themes suitable only for the Manson family will take center stage as players take on the role of Bob, who has been sent down to Earth in an attempt to prevent the Apocalypse. Stripped of his heavenly powers and immortality, Bob's sole remaining trump card is the ability to possess any human he can catch. Since humans are far more adept and suited for violent action than fat, winged babies, this works out well in his search for the seven seas.
**Picture:** Maybe if they spent less time hyping this game, it would actually be done
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## Planescape: Torment

**Genre:** Role-playing
**The Pitch:** The evil twin for *Baldur's Gate*. Although the two titles may seem similar on the surface, particularly as both utilize the isometric Infinity engine developed by BioWare, this new baby has a far darker streak. Of all the *AD&D* worlds, Planescape is one of the harshest, and both the storyline and art style will reflect that. So if you enjoy a bit of grit in your games, this tale of immortality and perpetual loss should appeal
**Picture:** Eternal pain, only fun
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## Star Trek: New Worlds

**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** Have you ever wondered why they call it the "Neutral Zone," when it always seems to be under some kind of contention? We have,

ENEMY ENGAGED

# APACHE HAVOC

"LOOK OUT LONGBOW!"
–PC GAMES

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## THE ULTIMATE FIGHTING MACHINES.

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- ★ 3D engine specifically designed for low level helicopter combat.
- ★ Highly detailed and articulated 3D models and authentic flight dynamics.
- ★ Three vast combat zones featuring countless missions and dynamic campaigns that offer something different every time you play.
- ★ All weather missions - day, night, dusk, dawn and rain.

- ★ Massive multi-player campaigns, via serial, modem, LAN or Internet.
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- ★ Fantastic stereo sound effects and speech.
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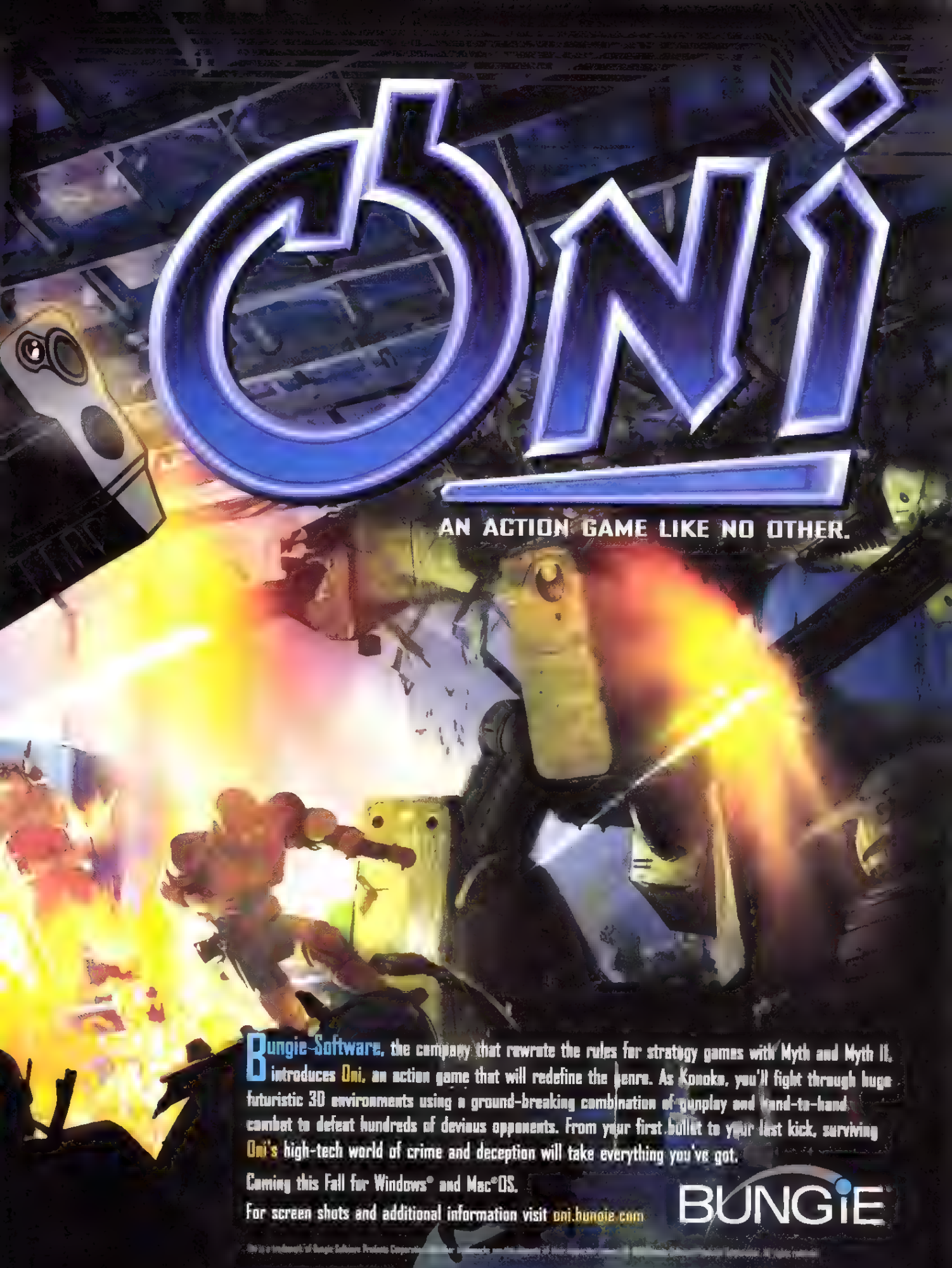
KONOKO'S ONLY FUTURE
IS TO AVENGE HER PAST.




Bungie Software, the company that rewrote the rules for strategy games with Myth and Myth II, introduces Oni, an action game that will redefine the genre. As Konoko, you'll fight through huge futuristic 3D environments using a ground-breaking combination of gunplay and hand-to-hand combat to defeat hundreds of devious opponents. From your first bullet to your last kick, surviving Oni's high-tech world of crime and deception will take everything you've got.

Coming this Fall for Windows® and Mac®OS.

For screen shots and additional information visit oni.bungie.com

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# WHOA!

## LAUNCH INTO A NEW LEV



PANZER GENERAL GOES 3D

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this game doesn't intend to answer that question. Instead, it plans to add more fuel to the interspecies fire, as a new system of resource-rich worlds has suddenly appeared in the heart of the Neutral Zone. (Why? Clumsy damn Romulans, that's why.) Now all three dominant local races are laying claim to the planetary foundlings, and players will have to take on the role of a human, Klingon, or Romulan commander and attempt to colonize (or conquer) before their rivals can.
**Picture:** *TrekCraft*
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Star Trek: Starfleet Command
**Genre:** Strategy
**The Pitch:** Fans of the old *Starfleet Battles* tactical boardgame are probably salivating at the thought of playing a modern, computer version of their archaic favorite. That venerable offline time-killer was a versatile and well-crafted system which attracted a core of extremely rabid players. This game promises the same sense of capital ship combat in the *Star Trek* universe, only with shiny 3D graphics and way less backing up because somebody forgot to do something during their turn.
**Picture:** Trekkies waiting in lines weeks before this game's release date.
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## JANE'S COMBAT SIMULATIONS

### A-10 Warthog
**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** A generally simple plane (compared to more modern fighters) means that Warthog will be somewhat less daunting than some of Jane's other hard-core sims. This doesn't mean that the game will be dumbed down; rather, that there just isn't as much stuff in an A-10's cockpit and controls to confuse you. The game will ship with two types of campaigns, one that ramps up in difficulty and one that starts out hardcore.
**Picture:** The Warthog of your dreams.
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### F/A-18
**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** Produced by the same Baltimore, Maryland-based studio that brought us Jane's *F-15*, the game will feature carrier operations, will come with the detailed avionics that are a hallmark of many Jane's titles, and will have an all new terrain engine (no more of *F-15*'s morphing hills).
**Picture:** Many failed carrier landings.
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### USAF
**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** Developed by the team responsible for *Israeli Air Force*, this game will let you fly eight jets from the last 35 years: the F-105, F-4E, F-15C/E, F-117, F-16, A-10, and F-22. You'll fly and fight in a variety of locales and eras, for those with a historical bent, go downtown over Vietnam or Iraq, other locales will allow you to zip down the Grand Canyon in the present day U.S., or return to Europe for a hypothetical, "semi-dynamic" campaign over Germany. In all, the game will feature some 62 different missions.
**Picture:** "America, America."
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## LIONHEAD

### Black & White
**Genre:** Strategy Sorta Thing
**The Pitch:** This game is set in Eden, a peaceful and idyllic world populated by tribes based on real world cultures. Aztecs, Japanese, Tibetans, Greeks, Zulus, and others live in peaceful coexistence... until the player arrives. A member of a race of world-traveling sorcerers, the player steps into this perfect world and begins to meddle. From a citadel located in a remote corner of the gameworld, the player watches the Edeans as they go about their daily lives, oblivious to the fact that they are merely pawns in a larger magical conflict. Other sorcerers have also discovered Eden, and seek to impose their own beliefs on its inhabitants. The player derives power from the worship of the Edeans, and each tribe grants spells of a different nature. Magic will run the gamut from good to evil, but it is up to the player to determine what magic to use and how to use it.
**Picture:** Those graphics are real—real good, that is.
**Release Date:** 1999

## LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS

### Flight Combat: Thunder Over Europe
**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** *Flight Unlimited* goes to WWII. The game will ship with 16 different flyable types planes, and some of these will be further subdivided into different variants, making for a total of 24 flyable craft (six non-flyable craft are included as well). The types of planes are varied as well, from prop-fighters like the Mustang, Spitfire, and Bf-109, ground-pounders like the P-47, bombers like the B-24, B-17 and Ju-88, and a few exotics like the Me-163 and Me-262. Fans of the big bombers will be happy to hear that they'll be able to be gunners on the multi-stationed craft. The game will come with two campaigns: the Battle of Britain and the aerial assault on Germany.
**Picture:** Saving the best for last?
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Flight Unlimited III
**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** This third game in the well-known civilian flight sim series heads into enemy territory. Seattle,

FORGOTTEN REALMS

# Baldur's Gate

## Tales of the Sword Coast

Legends of treasures lost and monsters to be defeated abound in the region. Almost all have at least some basis in truth. Are you up to the task? Will you return with even more fame than you accumulated in your previous travels? Or will you journey off, never to be heard from again-the source of your *own* legend, in turn...?

*Continue your adventures with the character you created in the original game.*

*Join up with new friends or meet old enemies.*

*New powerful spells, character kits, and additional enchanted items to be found.*

*Multiplayer support - up to 6 players via modem, LAN, or Internet.*

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TEEN T

BLACK ISLE

Includes ROGER WILCO voice communications software to chat while playing!

home of Microsoft, makers of its main competitor *Flight Simulator.*
**Picture:** Hope they model rain well
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### System Shock 2
**Genre:** 3D Action Role-playing
**The Pitch:** Everyone who actually played it loved the original, and it's finally getting a sequel. Run around 3D environments killing things, building up your character with enhancements as you take on SHODAN, the mad computer, in this game powered by the technology previously developed for *Thief*
**Picture:** Big sales (final y)
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

## LUCASARTS

### Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine
**Genre:** Third-person 3D Action Adventure
**The Pitch:** Not to be outdone by his more famous movie brethren, Indiana Jones will also be getting a new game, this one set in the very early stages of the Cold War. Run, jump, swing across chasms, whip people and kill Nazis. He hates those guys, remember?
**Picture:** Move over Lara, Indy's here
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Star Wars Episode I: Obi Wan
**Genre:** 3D Action
**The Pitch:** Kick some major Jedi butt as the younger, more Ewan McGregor-ish Obi Wan in this first/third-person action game. A new engine is promised, though it looks eerily similar to the technology used in *Jedi Knight.* Some of the environments shown included a Tattoine-like desert world, areas of Coruscant and the palace in Naboo. Expect lots of force powers and lightsaber battles too. .
**Picture:** The game you really wanted on May 19th
**Release Date:** 2000

### Star Wars Force Commander
**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** This "classic" *Star Wars* game will take place on terrain familiar (Tatooine, Yavin 4, and the battle on Hoth) and new (the plains of Corellia, a computer complex on Ruul and the polar ice cap of the Imperial city-planet Coruscant). You'll play either a Rebel leader or an Imperial commander as you work through the story line, and you'll experience missions familiar to any RTS gamer: build & destroy, target a single objective, or take a defensive stance. You'll requisition new units and order them into battle where they'll gain experience. The game contains some 50 characters, units, and buildings, down from the original 100 planned for the title.
**Picture:** *ForceCraft*
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

Flight Unlimited III

# And now for something completely different

### The Sims
**Publisher:** Maxis
**Genre:** People Simulation
**The Pitch:** Spending time with this game, it's obvious that Maxis' penchant for games that are... different is alive and well. Will Wright, the creator of the original *SimCity* and the man in charge of this game, has said that he originally started out to create, in essence, a house simulation, and those roots are still quite apparent. Along the way, however, he found that the people he added to populate the houses were even more fascinating, so the game morphed into a portrayal of those people (called Sims). You basically act as a god in their lives (or perhaps "as the script writer for a soap opera" would be a more accurate description)—it's up to you to make work to make their lives happy ones or to make them living hells.

You influence things in the Sims' environment and suggest actions to them. Some parts of their lives—particularly relationships—are not easy, and you must work to help them create those interrelationships. Each Sim has his or her own personality, interests, and intellect, and these will all combine in interesting and unexpected ways. Sims may have differing views on things like politics, and in some cases they may just not get along. Like the real world, one Sim may like or be attracted to another, but the interest may not be shared.

In the game you'll have a neighborhood in which you build the Sims houses. Inside a house you'll control the Sims who are members of that household, but other Sims may visit and interact with those Sims under your control. If a Sim chooses to join a household (say, through marriage), that Sim will then come under your control. Save games will automatically create a web page for your households; you can post these pages for others to view and even allow them to download your houses. If you're really fanatical, you can import Sim skins, and put yourself into the game (or anything else—at the show there were some *Quake* skin Sims—my, Martha, have you seen the new neighbors?).

The game will touch on all aspects of life, although some will be rather, err, abstracted—Sims showering or climbing into a hot tub in the nude were fuzzed out in the demo, and the most risqué thing shown was a rather heated kiss between a husband and wife. Sims *will* have children, however, so you'll be able to create a whole Sim family. A big part of the game will be giving them a place to live (the original SimHouse idea shows through): you'll get to design rooms, put in lighting, furnishings, and windows, and generally have fun with SimArchitecture. The only question yet unanswered is will you be able to build a SimTreehouse?
**Picture:** A bunch of game geeks trying—and failing—to pick up a woman in the game. It was as hysterically funny (and pathetic) as it sounds
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

The Sims—Make friends, find a mate, try to score a date... just like real life. Only more realistic. And creepier...

## MAXIS

### SimMars
**Genre:** Spaced-out Strategy
**The Pitch:** This game involves the exploration, colonization, and (possibly) the terraforming of the Red Planet. While building a colony will be part of the game, don't expect it to be anything like city creation on Earth. First you'll have to explore Mars, using tools as humble as little robot rovers and as advanced as manned missions. Then, chose your site (each will have advantages and disadvantages) and struggle to get a viable colony going, worrying along the way about very basic things like oxygen and water. From there, well, we'll see—the Martian sky is the limit
**Picture:** *SimOutpostCity*
**Release Date:** 2000

# Rescue your mates, wreak havoc on the Reich, and still be home in time for tea.

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TALONSOFT

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## MICROPROSE

### Avalon Hill's Diplomacy

**Genre:** Strategy
**The Pitch:** This somewhat abstract game is set in the early days of the 20th Century. It's the days just before World War I, when countries jockeyed for position on the world stage, and everyone wanted to come out on top. War breaks out and it's every country for itself. You'll take on one of seven pre-WW I countries: Austria, Hungary, England, France, Germany, Italy Russia, or Turkey. Yes, there is abstract combat, but the diplomacy of the game's title is the key to gameplay; as Hasbro says, "Trust, betrayal, faith, and treachery rule the day."
**Picture:** If they can pull it off
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### B-17 Flying Fortress

**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** While the game will let you fly escort or intercept fighters, the focus is on simulating all (or most) aspects of the B-17 Flying Fortress. You can act as pilot, navigator, bomber, engineer (?!), or gunner; indeed, MicroProse says that "each of the 10 crew members' roles must be mastered." The game will also support single or multiplayer action.
**Picture:** Bombs away!
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### GP500

**Genre:** Racing
**The Pitch:** An officially licensed FIM racing title, it features tracks, riders, and motorcycles based on the actual GP500 racing season. You'll ride against up to 24 opponents, playing the circuit and working your way towards a championship. As expected, you can play against the AI or humans via multiplayer modes.
**Picture:** Kickstart your engines.
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Gunship III

**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** We got our first look at this sequel to the grand-daddy of all helicopter simulations last year. Back then it was based on the M1 Tank Platoon II engine, and was to interface with its ground-based predecessor. Apparently, though, the engine was getting a bit long in the tooth, and MicroProse scrapped it (or much of it) and has restarted the project based on a new engine.
**Picture:** Guns a blazin'
**Release Date:** 2000

### Majesty

**Genre:** Strategy
**The Pitch:** Formerly scheduled for release with Ripcord Games, this game puts you in charge of Ardania. You hire heroes that you send out on quests, charging them to retrieve this or vanquish that. Unlike other games, you don't control these heroes—they're true employees, with minds of their own, and they're not likely to do your bidding just because you're a nice person. To influence your heroes, you've got to build up a kingdom, and how it chooses to develop within affect the types of heroes you attract.
**Picture:** *SimHeroes of Might and Majesty*
**Release Date:** 2000

### M1 Tank Platoon II

**Genre:** Tank Simulation
**The Pitch:** MicroProse has said almost nothing about this game other than to acknowledge, unofficially, that it's under development and that it will work with the new *Gunship* game.
**Picture:** Tanks a-plenty
**Release Date:** 2000

### Sid Meier's Civilization III

**Genre:** Legendary Strategy
**The Pitch:** It was surprising to find that Firaxis, the company founded by former MicroProse designers Sid Meier, Brian Reynolds and Jeff Briggs, was back working with their former company. What wasn't surprising is the game they announced they were working on—the third game in the legendary *Civilization* franchise. Designed by Reynolds, who created *Civilization II* and *Alpha Centauri*, all they'll say about it at this point is that they'll be "fleshing out" the concepts of the first two games. In other news, would you be interested in playing a game of *Civilization III* where you took off for Alpha Centauri and started playing *Alpha Centauri*? And once you reached transcendence you'd move on to... well that game's something of a mystery, though the legendary Meier himself is working on this game. This game/concept, dubbed "The Sweep of Time Trilogy" will link the legendary games into one giant strategy epic. Oh dear.
**Picture:** Many hours wasted away... again
**Release Date:** 2000

### X-COM Alliance

**Genre:** 3D Action
**The Pitch:** This squad-based game puts you in the shoes of an X-COM team as you take on those oh-so-wacky aliens. While the individual levels won't be randomized, expect some of the *X-COM*-style research to creep its way into the design.
**Picture:** 3D sectoids.
**Release Date:** 2000

## MICROSOFT

### Age of Empires II

**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** The original put Microsoft on the RTS map with an addictive blend of well-tuned gameplay and incredible animation. Now Ensemble Studios is trying to one-up themselves, offering more of everything players liked the first time around. Gameplay spans from the fall of Rome through the Middle Ages.
**Picture:** Ch-ching
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

# Man of War II

"I've played every age of sail wargame that's come out in the past 12 years and this is the best of the lot."

William Trotter
PC Gamer
Wargame Columnist

"Man of War II finally gives computer Admirals a reason to rejoice!"
"Man of War II is a must buy for fans of classic naval warfare."

William [illegible]

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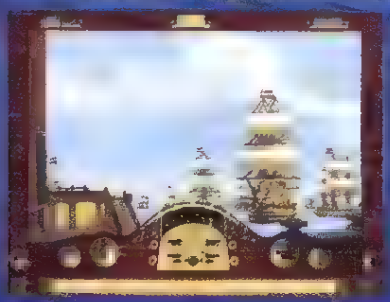
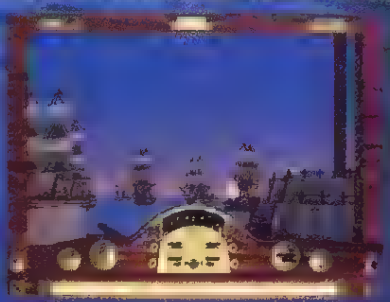
In the explosive tradition of Man of War comes the all new high seas [illegible] of War II. Take command as a Fleet Admiral, Division Commander or [illegible] and feel the fury of a broadside, the terror of a boarding action and the [illegible] of a glorious victory in a dramatic real-time first person perspective.





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### Allegiance
**Genre:** Online Space Simulation
**The Pitch:** This space combat game will support up to 350 simultaneous players, who can take on the role of a pilot, gunner or commander in one of 30 different ships. There is a simple deathmatch mode, but the real pull of the game is in the cooperative mode. Players form squads or teams and work with each other to gain team income, allowing them to buy some 40 pieces of special equipment, 22 weapons, and 10 missile types. An emphasis is placed on social interaction, where players can vote on how resources are spent and research is shared. A player's identity and accomplishments live are persistent in the world, allowing for famed heroes and notorious villains.
**Picture:** Could be huge if it works
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Asheron's Call
**Genre:** Online Role-playing
**The Pitch:** Developed by Turbine Entertainment Software, this game plans to take on the likes of *Everquest* and *Ultima Online* in the battle of the pay-for-play RPGs. While graphically it's not particularly impressive, there are some interesting features, such as an innovative spell system where potency is determined by use. I.e. if you invent a spell, it'll be a killer unt l everyone else uses it. Sorta like pop music.
**Picture:** Are there enough people to support three major online RPGs?
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Conquest: Frontier Wars
**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** This real-time strategy game features big, gorgeous fleets going at it in 3D space (strategy games are finally getting away from the "space is flat" myth). It's slipped into 2000, probably to beef up the visuals to *Homeworld*-ever goodness.
**Picture:** A later release means it won't disappear in *Homeworld*'s wake, as long as that game's as big as people seem to think it is.
**Release Date:** 2000

### Flight Simulator 2000
**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** The latest version of this staggeringly popular game comes with more, more, more. Planes, airports, etc. New and better graphics, Internet support, the list is endless...
**Picture:** Cinching
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Freelancer
**Genre:** Space Simulation
**The Pitch:** If games were judged solely on their graphic design—not their actual graphics, but their development of a consistent design aesthetic—this could be the best game ever created. Headed up by Mr. *Wing Commander* himself Chris Roberts, this *Privateer*-style trading and fighting space game looks incredible. An innovative space combat system is controlled with the mouse rather than a joystick, freeing you from piloting the actual ship and allowing you to focus on tactics, like targeting specific spots on enemy ships. A detailed gameworld with few scripted missions allows for open-ended play.
**Picture:** What *Privateer 3* might have been
**Release Date:** 2000

### Links 2000
**Genre:** Golf
**The Pitch:** With Microsoft owning Access, they're now in control of the world's premier golf game. The latest version includes five new courses, a new one-click swing method, four new golfers, eight player online support, five new modes of play (including Fuzzy Zoeller's Wolf Challenge), commentary from CBS golf analyst David Flaherty, and a new SkyScape option (for a greater variety of sky scenes).
**Picture:** Greens with envy
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

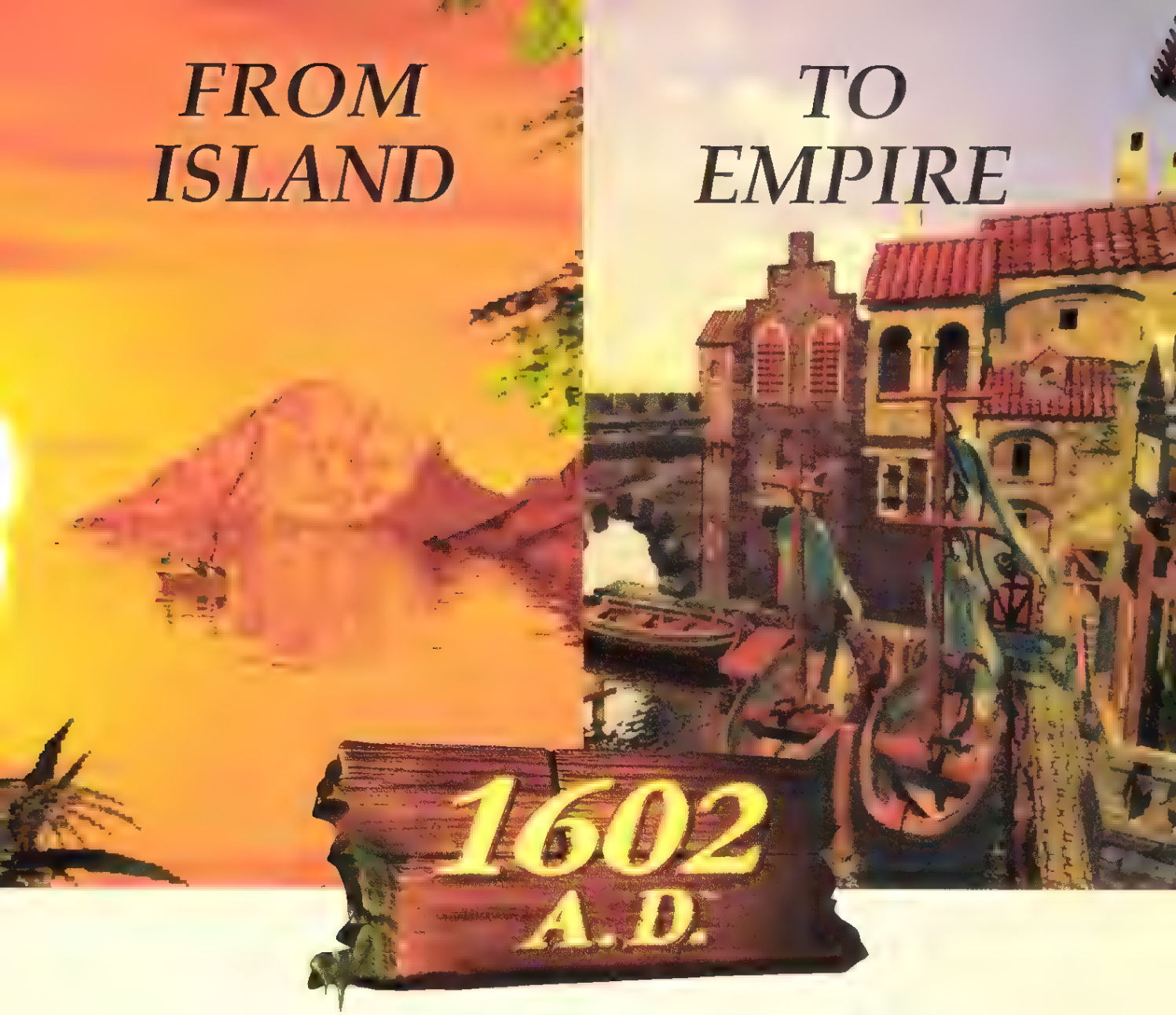
### Loose Cannon
**Genre:** Vehicular Manslaughter
**The Pitch:** This game mixes America's two favorite pastimes—driving and shooting stuff. You control a bounty hunter named Ashe who's in pursuit of Bishop, the leader of a criminal syndicate. You take on missions and decide whether or not to head out on foot or in one of the game's 15 customizable vehicles. The mission types include reconnaissance, hostage rescue, transportation, and assassination.
**Picture:** Road rage is all the rage
**Release Date:** 2000

### NBA Inside Drive 2000
**Genre:** Basketball
**The Pitch:** This game focuses on bright lights and fast, easy to learn gameplay. Each player's face has been slapped on their virtual body, providing a realistic, if not creepy, look. The game will ship with all 29 NBA teams and their respective home floors.
**Picture:** Tim Duncan is the best player in the NBA
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### NFL Fever 2000
**Genre:** Football
**The Pitch:** Sporting strong *Madden*-like visuals, the game will ship with all 31 NFL teams and stadiums, including the new look of the Tennessee Titans and the resurrected Cleveland Browns. Microsoft is stressing the fact that the game is a fast-paced and easy to play.
**Picture:** A legitimate *Madden* competitor
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Starlancer
**Genre:** Space Simulation
**The Pitch:** Mixing WWII-style combat with a sci-fi setting, this game features a story where countries from around the world (Earth, that is), including the United States, China, Russia, and Great Britain, are battling for territory on Earth, Mars, and other planets throughout the solar system. You're part of the 45th Volunteers squadron, and it's up to you to prove your-

# FROM ISLAND TO EMPIRE

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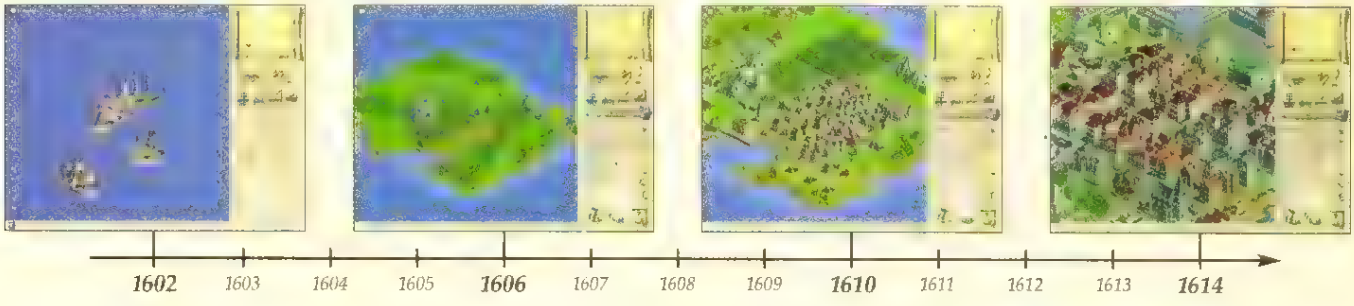


PC CD ROM

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self by blowing up the bad guys, securing territories, yadda yadda yadda. There's also a non-linear mission structure, customizable ships and sharp graphics.
**Picture:** *WWII Commander*
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

## MINDSCAPE

### Babyz
**Genre:** Baby Simulation
**The Pitch:** In this strange, uh, thing, you "adopt" a virtual baby. They will grow, getting teeth and hair as they get older. They'll learn to play with toys, speak and walk. The, uh, game will include a Virtual Play House replete with interesting places for baby to play, eat, and date musicians.
**Picture:** Virtual diaper changes
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Creatures 3
**Genre:** Creature Simulation
**The Pitch:** There's a new spaceship setting, five different worlds for your Norns to explore, smarter and more interactive creatures and nastier enemies.
**Picture:** Stop them before they kill.
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## MONOLITH

### No One Lives Forever
**Genre:** 3D Action
**The Pitch:** You're a 60's style spy in this stealthy, *Thief*-y, Bond-y, *GoldenEye*-y action game. Expect lots of cool gadgets and loads of *Austin Powers* esque humor.
**Picture:** The latest "*GoldenEye* for your PC"
**Release Date:** 2000

### Odium
**Genre:** Role-playing Strategy
**The Pitch:** "You've got your *Fallout* in my *X-COM*! You've got your *X-COM* in my *Fallout*! Could these be two great tastes that taste great together? This Lovecraftian game of Cold War intrigue features tactical combat, lots of stats and good graphics.
**Picture:** What's up with that name? Too close to "odious" for our tastes..
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Sanity
**Genre:** Third-person 3D Action
**The Pitch:** The LithTech engine made its debut in Monolith's *Shogo*, and it will show off its flexibility with this *Diablo*-like overhead third-person perspective game. You control this guy who runs through 3D environments killing all sorts of crazy things yadda yadda yadda. Looks pretty, that's for sure.
**Picture:** Insane in the membrane..
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Septerra Core
**Genre:** Role-playing
**The Pitch:** You are an inhabitant of the planet Septerra, a layered environment where concentric World Shells create seven unique ecosystems, and Bioengineering has ushered in a revolution of societal changes. Intrigued? If you like Japanese-styled RPGs, you should be.
**Picture:** Lots of people with big eyes and blue hair.
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

## NOVALOGIC

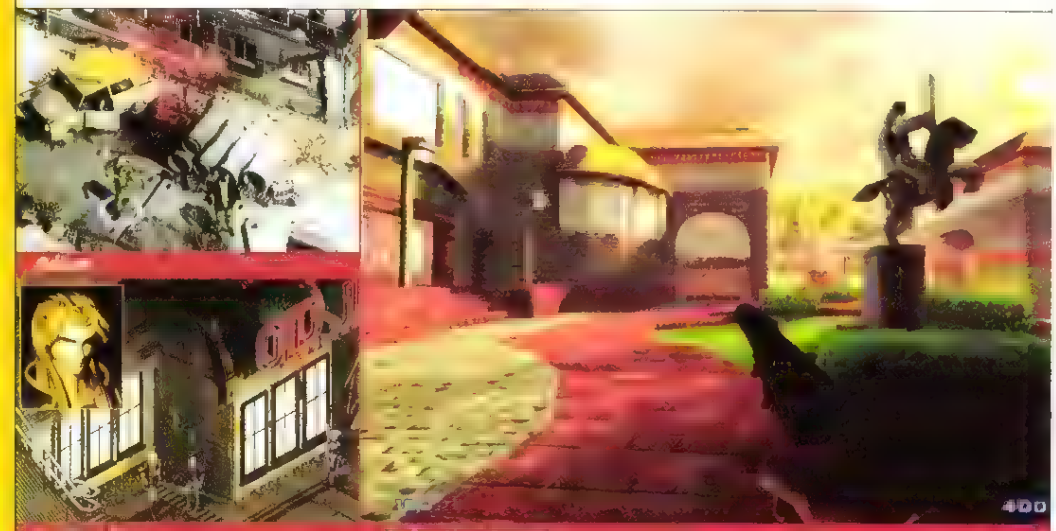
### Armored Fist 3
**Genre:** Tank Simulation
**The Pitch:** NovaLogic's tank sim gets its third time in the barrel, this time with the latest generation Voxel Space engine and even more stuff to shoot at.
**Picture:** Tanks for da voxels [wow, that's bad—ed.]
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Comanche 4
**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** A return to the original game's fun factor is promised with this latest iteration in the successful chopper sim series. It's still Voxels, but they look better than ever, and the emphasis is once again on flying fast and blowing stuff up good.
**Picture:** Lots of oil tanks to blow up.
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Delta Force 2
**Genre:** 3D Action
**The Pitch:** This version will feature an improved Voxel Space terrain engine supporting such tactical features as knee-high grass and more and better trees. While nothing is certain yet, there's at least the possibility that objects like buildings, weapons, and players could get the 3D accelerator treatment. Other enhancements include more dynamic single-player missions, better weapon balance in multiplayer games, co-op multiplayer, voice over data for NovaWorld games, and the usual host of new weapons and toys to play with.
**Picture:** Praise for solid gameplay drowning out cries for 3D acceleration.
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Maximum Overkill
**Genre:** 3D Action
**The Pitch:** The name of the game is "somewhat realistic future combat," and in concept it sounds a bit like DID's *Wargasm*. The action takes place in a near-future environment, and players will be allowed to control various air and land combat vehicles (10 in all) as they try to blow each other up. The game will include 40 single-player missions and support up to 32 players via their NovaWorld online service.
**Picture:** *VoxelCasm*
**Release Date:** 2000

### Tachyon: The Fringe
**Genre:** Space Simulation
**The Pitch:** A space shooter in the *Wing Commander* vein, with traces of *Privateer* thrown in for good measure, it has a good sense of scale with huge ships and stations as counterpoints to the player's dinky fighter craft and a streamlined control and interface system. As a mercenary, you choose your side and fight out a



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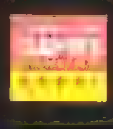

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war between two competing organizations. Along the way you'll need to earn money to upgrade your ship, in traditional space game fashion
**Picture:** *Voxel Commander* (OK, it doesn't have voxels, but that sounds like a cool name, right?)
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Wolfpack II
**Genre:** Submarine Simulation
**The Pitch:** Not much is known about this title, which is still a ways away. It's a return to one of their original games, WWII sub sim, but with all the modern technical and graphics treatments applied
**Picture:** *Voxels of the Deep* (see *Tachyon* disclaimer)
**Release Date:** 2000

## ORIGIN

### Ultima Ascension
**Genre:** Role-playing
**The Pitch:** This gorgeous-looking 3D re-invention of the series has been criticized for what fans were claiming an abandonment of its classic style of gameplay. While perhaps short on stats, this is no Avatar Raider. Jumping exists, but you double click on a spot and he jumps. One of the hallmarks of the series is its attention to detail, and this is certainly carried through. Clocks in the gameworld keep time, day and night cycle by, the sun is visible in its track through the sky, all objects cast shadows depending on the sun's current position, the phases of the moons are apparent, and a massive global weather system travels across the map, causing sight-limiting storms
**Picture:** Yes, you can bake bread
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## PSYGNOSIS

### Drakan: Order of the Flame
**Genre:** 3D Action Adventure
**The Pitch:** Psygnosis will be giving all of us the chance to bond with our dragon brothers and sisters in this third-person 3D-action/adventure game that features, well, dragons. Travel with Rynn and her scaly pet as they progress through beautiful levels flying, killing, the usual stuff
**Picture:** *Dragon Raider(s) of Pern*
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Expert Pool
**Genre:** Pool
**The Pitch:** Choose from any 22 different opponents with up to 176 configurations, each with separate skills. Then play pool with them. Wow. 13 balls, 3D graphics, Internet play, etc.
**Picture:** Pool games need more bump mapping
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Hired Guns
**Genre:** 3D Action
**The Pitch:** The original was an Amiga title that divided the screen into the separate perspectives of four characters, combining elements of action, role-playing and adventure games. Psygnosis is revisiting this hybrid with a remake that utilizes the Unreal engine. A control panel allows you to send commands to the rest of your team, such as lead, follow, rally, cover and various options for formations
**Picture:** Four separate windows running *Unreal*
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Metal Fatigue
**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** Take giant modular robots (Mecha-style), drop them in multiple environments, model them in 3D and voila—instant game. You know the drill—build a base, create units, send them to enemy, die, repeat until slightly crispy
**Picture:** Real-time strategy fatigue
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Nations: WWII Fighter Command
**Genre:** Flight Simulation
**The Pitch:** Does the world really need another WWII flight simulator? The game will feature 45 historically accurate missions that can be flown over satellite-mapped terrain for the United States, Germany or the British RAF. 3D clouds and weather effects such as rain and sunsets make a showing in the eye-candy department, and the planes will feature virtual cockpits with dynamic instrumentation. The game includes such crowd favorites as the P-51D Mustang, P-47 Thunderbolt, Submarine Spitfire Mk XIV and the Messerschmitt Bf109G.
**Picture:** Had enough yet?
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Panzer Elite
**Genre:** Tank Simulation
**The Pitch:** This smart-looking WWII game aims to create a tactical level armored simulation that incorporates the major features of that style of warfare
**Picture:** They're on the right track (pun intended)
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### PRO 18: World Tour Golf
**Genre:** Golf
**The Pitch:** The game will feature a fancy swing interface, three courses and sharp graphics.
**Picture:** But it's golf
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

## RED ORB

### Prince of Persia 3D
**Genre:** 3D Action Adventure
**The Pitch:** The much-beloved action game gets a late 90s makeover and goes 3D. The animation is beautiful, the environments spectacular, the sword-fighting interface elegant and the gameplay thus far seems solid
**Picture:** *Karateka 3D*
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Warlords BattleCry
**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** This real-time version of the old-time favorite features nine distinct races, different hero races and 16 hero classes, a variety of victory conditions for both single

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TEEN T

and multiplayer. A story-based campaign, divided into six "chapters," follows the path of either the good side or the bad.
**Picture:** SSG's vaunted AI going real-time (again)
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Warlords IV
**Genre:** Turn-based Strategy
**The Pitch:** Though the specifics are unclear, Red Orb has signed with SSG to produce another turn-based installment of this venerable series
**Picture:** Thank you
**Release Date:** 2000

## RED STORM ENTERTAINMENT

### Force 21
**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** This game of real-time strategy and tactics, combat command and realism, a sort of *Rainbow Six* with helicopters and tanks. It features plausibly futuristic units in a scenario where an expansionist China has invaded Kazakhstan, drawing the interest of both Russia and the U.S.
**Picture:** *Clancy & Conquer*
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Rogue Spear
**Genre:** 3D Action Strategy
**The Pitch:** You'll again take charge of RAINBOW, a high-trained multi-national anti-terrorist (now's that for hypens?) unit facing a tougher threat: two very different groups that have joined forces to wreak more havoc alone than they could together... havoc you, of course, must stop them from wreaking. Red Storm says the game, played across 18 missions in 16 locales, will cover a range of mission types, from direct assaults to hostage rescue and surveillance.
**Picture:** Ch-ching
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## RIPCORD GAMES

### GorkaMorka
**Genre:** Fantasy Racing
**The Pitch:** Build up your game of thugs, err, drivers in the race to become the toughest mob, err, team in Mektown. Along the way you'll recruit Orks to your gang, capture other gangs' vehicles, and generally make 3D mayhem through either a single player campaign or multiplayer action.
**Picture:** Possibly the dumbest name ever given to a computer game
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Legend of the Blade Masters
**Genre:** Action Role-playing
**The Pitch:** You control young Eric Valdemar, hero, lost in the woods but not for long. You and up to two companions will strive to harness weaponry magic and become BladeMasters, and hence, save the kingdom from mass destruction. You view the characters from a third-person perspective with a camera that centers on the selected character
**Picture:** *Return to Diablo*
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Noble Armada
**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** Return to the *Fading Suns* universe as you take charge of fleets as they battle in 3D space. While tactical fleet combat a major part of the game, expect some of the traditional *Fading Suns* "extras" as well: diplomacy and trading, character creation, and starship design
**Picture:** A kinder, gentler *Homeworld*
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Spec Ops II: Green Berets
**Genre:** 3D Action
**The Pitch:** The original was a case of close but no cigar, so the sequel offers some promise. You'll visit five new locales with up to four rangers under your control (versus the two of the original). You'll fight through nearly 30 missions and yes Virginia, there will be multiplayer. You'll even be able to put together your own team of Green Berets.
**Picture:** Last time they were close...
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

## SIERRA SPORTS

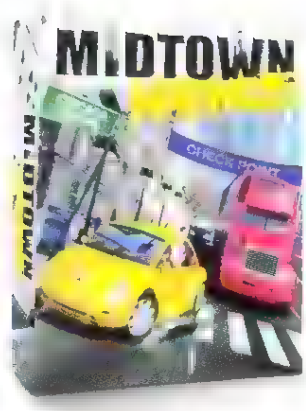
### Professional Bull Rider
**Genre:** Bull Simulation
**The Pitch:** Quit laughing. Players will have the opportunity to play as one of 35 star bull riders... or 15 top-ranked bulls. Individual scenarios and careers can both be played solo or multiplayer, and running commentary is provided by Justin McKee, PBR's familiar TV announcer
**Picture:** We don't make this up
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Field & Stream: Trophy Bass 3D
**Genre:** Fishy Simulation
**The Pitch:** Because there really weren't enough 3D fishing games on the market, Sierra decided to do up this game in all of its 3D accelerated glory. A new fish cam is for the truly waterlogged. We wish we could say this wasn't the silliest thing we'd ever heard
**Picture:** Ch-ching
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Field & Stream: Trophy Buck II
**Genre:** Animal Slaughter Simulation
**The Pitch:** Not to be outdone by its aquatic sibling, this game offers eight hunting regions, lots of things to kill, Internet play, 3D sound...
**Picture:** It won't sell as well as the crappy hunting games
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## SIERRA STUDIOS

### Babylon 5 Space Combat Simulator
**Genre:** Space Simulation
**The Pitch:** This game gives would-be Rangers and Earthforce pilots a chance to slip behind the stick of a Starfury. For the xenophilic among us, the game's multiplayer mode promises action combat aplenty, at

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the controls of Narn, Drazi, Centauri, and Minbari starfighters. With an evolving story line co-designed by series creator, J. Michael Straczynski and brand-new music from show composer Christopher Franke, this should be the next-best thing to being there.
**Picture:** *Syndicated Series Commander*
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Gabriel Knight III: Blood of the Sacred, Blood of the Damned
**Genre:** 3D Adventure
**The Pitch:** Jane Jensen's popular anti-hero gains a new sense of depth—literally—in this 3D installment of the series. The familiar cast of previous games goes off to the small town of Rennes-le-Chateau in rural France. There, players will control both Gabriel and Grace in their attempt to solve an ancient mystery and recover the kidnapped son of an exiled prince. Perhaps the long-sought "treasure" of Rennes-le-Chateau will also prove the solution to Gabriel's case—and the undoing of a dynasty of vampires.
**Pictures:** Games with vampires are this year's WWI isms.
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Half-Life: Opposing Force
**Genre:** 3D Add-on Action
**The Pitch:** Yep, it's an expansion pack for *Half-Life*. This time in, you're a soldier sent to investigate an unknown alien race. Needless to say, the extraterrestrials aren't particularly friendly, a fact which should happily justify excessive use of your new military hardware. New multiplayer maps and additional character models round out the goodies in this upcoming pack.
**Picture:** More, more, more.
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Homeworld
**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** This game has been receiving so much buzz in the press you'd think it was the second coming of God-game creator Peter Molyneux. In reality, it's a fairly standard RTS game taking place in 3D space. But it has killer looks, and there's something undeniably interesting about space ships circling around and shooting things in 3D.
**Picture:** We're skeptical here too, but we'll probably be wrong.
**Release Date:** Summer 1999

### Middle Earth
**Genre:** Online Role-playing
**The Pitch:** Wizards and dragons and hobbits, oh my! The world is done in 3D and populated with the usual assortment of (literally) Tolkien-esque characters.
**Picture:** Based on the license, a real competitor for *Ultima Online* and *EverQuest*.
**Release Date:** 2000

### Orcs: Revenge of the Ancient
**Genre:** Real-time Strategy
**The Pitch:** Nothing says "we've got the Tolkien license, and we're not afraid to use it!" like two Middle Earth games in a row. The game is set in the Third Age, during the time of the War for the Ring. Players are given command of four Orcs, and assigned the dangerous task of keeping order between the Dark Power's evil minions. These Orcs may be trained in many methods of battle, and the combination of their type of training and individual personalities should lead to a wide variety of fighting moves and tactics. Fully-trained and outfitted Orcs can be sent into real-time 3D combat in either the single- or multiplayer versions of the game.
**Picture:** *OrcCraft* (that's probably redundant)
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Pharaoh
**Genre:** Strategy
**The Pitch:** If building the Roman empire was your cup of wine, you'd probably also enjoy setting up a nice little dynasty in ancient Egypt. The yearly cycle of flood and ebb via the Nile will allay waste to hastily planned farming schedules. Naval invasions, as well, can surprise the unwary ruler. But with deification and a monumental pyramid as the reward for excellent management, what wannabe pharaon could possibly turn down this challenge?
**Picture:** *SimPyramid*
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### SWAT 3: Close Quarter Battles
**Genre:** 3D Action Strategy
**The Pitch:** This near-future tactical simulation promises to drop you right onto the front lines of justice. It will feature 20 missions, 100 characters, additional weapons and gear, and a greatly increased variety of situations. The 3D environments, advanced AI, and team dynamics should give any would-be element leader a taste of the real thing.
**Picture:** *Rainbow SWAT*
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Team Fortress 2: Brotherhood in Arms
**Genre:** Online Action
**The Pitch:** Building on the original *Team Fortress* concept of multiple character classes with helpful skills, the developers are now working to make team play essential instead of merely convenient. Limited ammo, improved abilities, and complete removal of the FPS' traditional "powerups" will soon be excellent reasons to bring along a Medic, Engineer, or Spy.
**Picture:** If it works, watch out.
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

## SIMON & SCHUSTER

### Deer Avenger II
**Genre:** Bad Joke
**The Pitch:** Bambo is back, and this time he's out to avenge the death of his doe-eyed (literally) love at the hands of callous yahoos.
**Picture:** No, we aren't making this up.
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Mob Rule
**Genre:** Strategy

# DISCIPLES

## SACRED LANDS

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PC CD-ROM

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**The Pitch:** Take a little bit of Eidos' hardcore mob game *Gangsters* and add a healthy dose of Bullfrog-style humor and you've got the basis for this upcoming title intending to poke fun at the subgenre that is gangster gaming
**Picture:** Black Sabbath songs
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Star Trek: Deep Space Nine—The Fallen

**Genre:** 3D Action Adventure
**The Pitch:** Kind of the forgotten show when it comes to Star Trek gaming, *Deep Space Nine* is seeing only its second game—and the first in several years. Control all of your favorite characters in this third-and first-person game utilizing the *Unreal* engine
**Picture:** *UnrealTrek*
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

## SOUTHPEAK

### 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea: The Adventure Continues

**Genre:** Underwater Adventure
**The Pitch:** A group is sent to research the possibility of farming the ocean floor, and they stumble upon Captain Nemo's long-lost Nautilus submarine. And when ruthless sea-going villains attack, the SeaSource dive team is forced to commandeer this legendary vessel and set off for parts unknown
**Picture:** Water, water everywhere
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Dukes of Hazzard

**Genre:** Racing
**The Pitch:** Join Bo, Luke, Daisy, Cooter and the rest of the gang as they battle Boss Hogg, Enos and Roscoe. Drive the General Lee and jump a lot of things in this mission-based game
**Picture:** Redneck racing
**Release Date:** 2000

### Wild Wild West

**Genre:** Adventure
**The Pitch:** Based on the movie of the TV show, you take on the roles of James T. West and Artemus Gordon, creating mechanical devices, deciphering cryptic messages, shooting from the hip assuming various disguises, wrestling assassins, and eventually rescuing President Grant from the same conspiracy that claimed the life of President Lincoln.
**Picture:** Will Smith in 3D (again)
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

## SSI

### Close Combat IV

**Genre:** Wargame
**The Pitch:** This series has found a new home at SSI. Tentatively subtitled The Battle of the Bulge, the most

significant addition to the series is a new strategic layer to the battle-map that will let you control the movement of larger groups of forces at a higher level of command. Once you meet the enemy, the game switches to the familiar tactical view
**Picture:** It's Bulge-a-riffic!
**Release Date:** Winter 1999

### Flanker 2.0

**Genre:** Flight Simulations
**The Pitch:** Set in Crimea, the game will have a full dynamic campaign mission module. Also planned are a mission save system and an extensive interactive training section complete with an in-cockpit instructor. A new aircraft, the Su-33 naval variant of the Flanker, will make its appearance, something that will no doubt spice up the 16 player LAN games or the two player Internet games
**Picture:** Flying the friendly skies
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Harpoon4

**Genre:** Wargame
**The Pitch:** This follow-on to the hard-core modern naval wargame went back to the design shop earlier this year, so has been pushed

way back into next year
**Picture:** We'll get back to you
**Release Date:** 2000

### Panzer General III Assault

**Genre:** Wargame
**The Pitch:** The series moves to 3D. Whereas earlier General games focused on leaders, each leader commands a particular type of unit and works under an "Action System" the better leader can issue more orders to their units in a turn, so will be valuable on the WWII West Front battlefields the game portrays. You'll have a limit, though, on the total amount of action in a turn, so as commanding general it'll be up to you to decide many low quality "slow" leaders or a few that can do a lot?
**Picture:** 3D wargaming
**Release Date:** Fall 1999

### Pool of Radiance II

**Genre:** Role-playing
**The Pitch:** Developed by Stormfront Studios, creators of the original game, the game is again set in the *Forgotten Realms* world of the *AD&D* universe. Players control a party of six adventurers in various quests that form an overarching storyline involving the discovery of a new Pool of Radiance in the mysterious and ancient elven ruins of Myth Drannor. Multiplayer support is also available for up to six players
**Picture:** The return of the Gold Box game
**Release Date:** 2000

### Reach for the Stars

**Genre:** Role-playing
**The Pitch:** SSG's classic is reborn. In this epic turn-based "4X" game (eXplore, eXpand, eXploit, eXterminate), you conduct research and diplomacy, design and produce ships. In addition to the random, open-ended scenarios, you'll be given 30 preset ones to conquer. Some of these may involve starting you with a full set of research already completed and with fleets formed up, ready for war, such scenarios will focus on military action to the exclusion of all else. Other scenarios will start you with nothing, while others may put you somewhere in between
**Picture:** Space strategy fans rejoicing
**Release Date:** 2000

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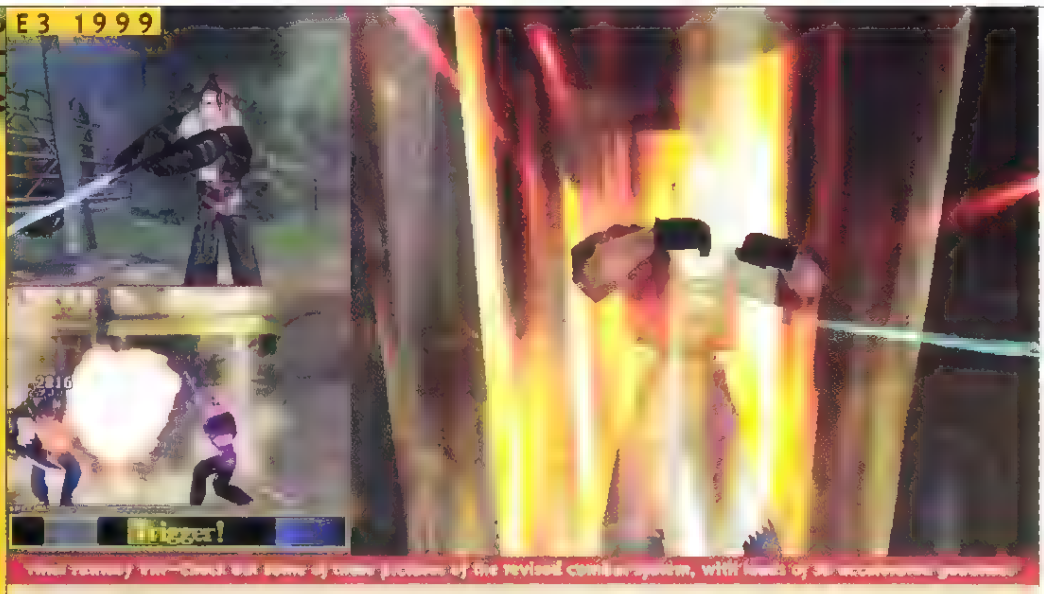



Final Fantasy VIII—Check out some of these previews of the revised combat system, with hints of an accompanying guitarist!

# Beauty is in the eye of everyone who's seen this game

**Final Fantasy VIII**
Publisher: Squaresoft
Genre: Role-playing
The Pitch: Okay, pop quiz—what game *pre*-sold twice the copies of *Diablo*'s entire run, increased those numbers by half again in the first month of release, and followed a prequel which sold more copies on its own than every *King's Quest* in history, put together? Yup, *Final Fantasy VIII*. The series is famous for exotic worlds, fascinating characters, well-crafted stories, fun gameplay and ease of use, and this latest version is currently available only in Japan for the PlayStation, has already acquired a fanatic group of American devotees, some of whom paid hundreds of dollars for import copies and the machines necessary to play them. Many of these players have admitted to knowing less than a dozen words of Japanese, but swear nonetheless that the game is the best thing they've ever played.

Luckily for those of us who prefer our entertainment in English, the folks at SquareSoft are cranking away on a translated version. Better still, the release of the computer version of will quickly follow the PlayStation version.

Following traditional themes, *Final Fantasy VIII* takes place in a world where fantasy and science exist side by side. Spells of varying complexity make up a good portion of the "timed turn-based" combat system and mythological beasts often number among your opponents. Each previous installment in the series has emphasized more and more science fiction elements, and the latest is no exception. The characters will even have to travel to an orbital space station in order to complete the epic storyline.

As always, story is a vital part of this game. The plot this time follows a soldier named Squall, who is caught up in a political and physical battle between two rival factions. During this conflict, he finds himself questioning the loyalties of the people around him, unsure of whom to trust. According to SquareSoft, there will definitely be an aspect of romance in the tale this time, as well as elements of mystery and intrigue.

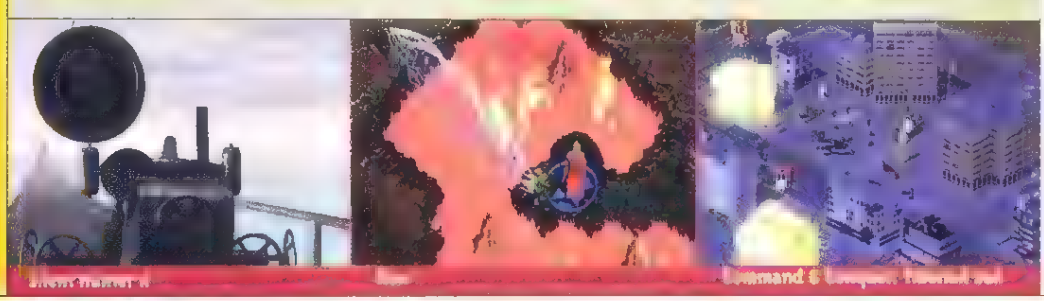
Once again, all plot development and exposition will be carried entirely by gestures and printed text—no voice will be recorded. In some ways, this is a relief. *Final Fantasy* is far too splendid of a series to be devalued by standard computer game voice acting.

Graphically, the PlayStation version of the game is light-years ahead of its predecessor, substituting texture maps for single-color polygons and showcasing a gorgeous new collection of spell effects. But the hardware-accelerated PC version still puts its console sibling to shame. Not only are the details on each character more visible, but the characters themselves are smoother and far less pixelated. Magical effects, as well, seem quite detailed and fluid. The fight scenes move smoothly and quickly, even when a large-effect spell is cast. (Speaking of which, imagine a Summon which creates twin, parallel lines of fire, starting in front of the target and snaking off into the distance behind it. Just as you're starting to wonder what the heck you've summoned, you hear the distant whistle of an onrushing train...)

Oh, one interesting note for *Final Fantasy VII* players—remember Tifa's "slot machine"-style limit break? Well, this concept is back. A twitch element has been added to some of the limit break attacks in the new game, requiring players to hit a certain button at a certain time during the move (or even complete a sequence of buttons as in most fighting games) in order to increase the damage caused by the attack. The dexterity-challenged should not despair, however, since even a botched break will cause *some* damage.

While it won't answer the question of how a fantasy could be final eight times, *Final Fantasy VIII* should be *huge*.

Picture: Ch-ching
Release Date: Winter 1999



Silent Hunter II — Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun

### Rites of War
Genre: Turn-based Strategy
The Pitch: This *Warhammer 40K* game is the last SSI game to utilize the venerable *Panzer General II* engine. A throwback to the beloved *Fantasy General*, in the campaign game you play the Emperor, you can blast through the campaign of 24 missions with varied victory conditions
Picture: The end of an era
Release Date: Summer 1999

### Silent Hunter II
Genre: Submarine Simulation
The Pitch: This sequel is being launched into the icy waters of the Atlantic. It's 3D accelerated, and there will be a new AI. A new dynamic campaign, Internet play and mission recorders round out the new features
Picture: Silent, but deadly
Release Date: Winter 1999

### Steel Panthers IV
Genre: Wargame
The Pitch: Few details exist about this game. Hints say it may be a more radical departure, design-wise, from the earlier games.
Picture: We'll get back to you
Release Date: 2000

## WESTWOOD STUDIOS

### Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun
Genre: Real-time Strategy
The Pitch: For the two people who aren't already familiar with every intimate detail about this RTS game, Kane and NOD are back, and it's up to GDI to wipe them out. Or vice versa. And watch out for that new "alien" technology. New voxel units allow for more animation, and there's colored lighting everywhere.
Picture: Ch-ching
Release Date: Fall 1999

### Nox
Genre: Action Role-playing
The Pitch: This superficially *Diablo*-esque game features a more elaborate magic-based combat system. Your character has a queue of five spells; a right click casts them in the order in which they're entered. To queue a spell, you have to cast it using the keyboard. Each spell is like a macro, tapped out on the cursor keys, which represent hand gestures. Since the game is decidedly oriented towards action, most of the puzzles are key hunts, but some of them will require moving objects and pressure plates.
Picture: "I put a spell on you"
Release Date: Winter 1999

# clans

"Strategy First obviously has a good eye for quality and appears to have a prime candidate for sleeper hit of the year."

Chris Harding
*Adrenaline Vault*

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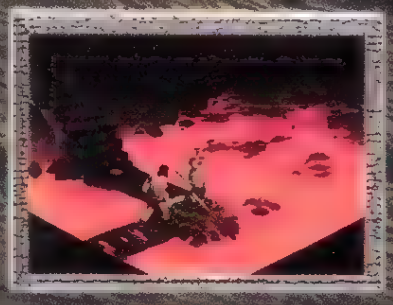
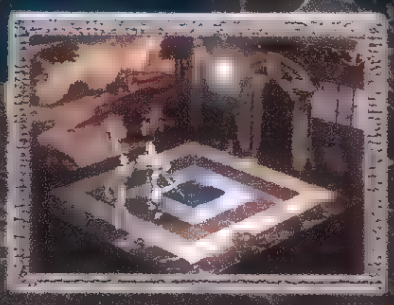




## Coming July 1999!

Strategy First

TEEN
AGES 13+
PC CD-ROM

# The next big thing

by Jason Cross

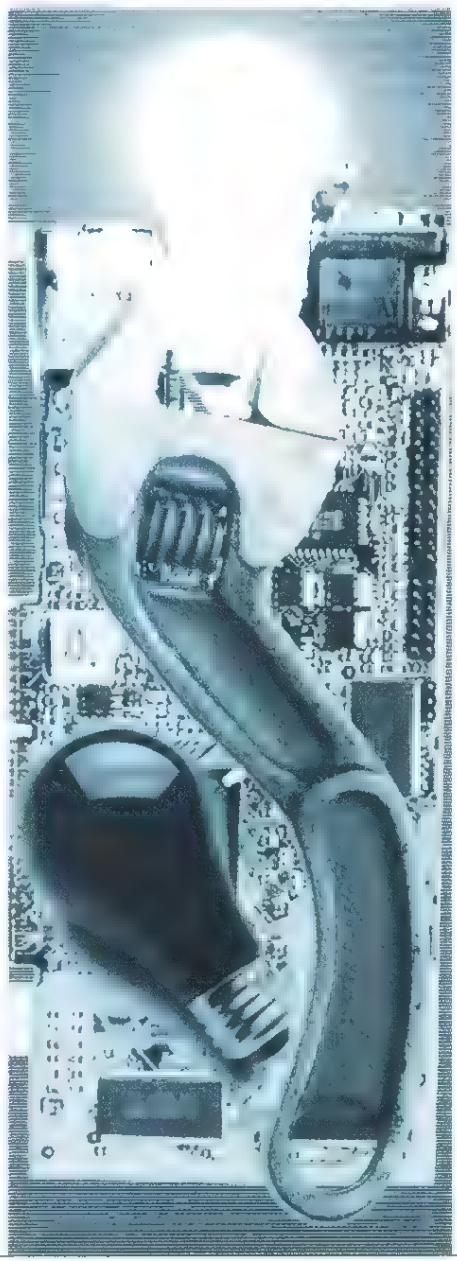
This spring the video card offerings are all pretty good, but merely evolutions of existing designs. The chipset showing the least amount of change is the TNT2 from NVIDIA, which is built on such a feature-complete base (the original TNT) that simply improving the speed and maximum memory is all that's needed. The Savage4 is the Savage3D with multitexturing, a lot more memory, and a higher clock rate. The Voodoo3 is the Banshee with multitexturing at a higher speed (or a one-chip Voodoo$^2$ with 2D at a higher speed, depending on how you look at it). Matrox's G400 is a souped-up G200. The list goes on and on. The Permidia 3 and Rage128 are probably the only two products to be drastically different from their predecessors, but both of those had predecessors which were notorious for seriously lacking the 3D features and speed required for gaming.

So what's next—another update of the old designs? Not likely. I've spoken with several software developers, video card manufacturers, and other industry insiders to find out what's coming down the pipe. Naturally, nobody was ready publicly say what their next chip could do, or reveal the plans of another company. Having said that, certain terms and phrases seem to pop up no matter who you talk to.

Transformation and Lighting calculations done on the video card is the next major technological revolution. Right now, the "polygons per second" rating of a video card is virtually meaningless, as the main CPU does the geometrical calculations to scale, rotate, or move 3D objects and light them, then passes those polygons on to the video card—the CPU can't nearly transform and light as many polygons as the card can accept. By having specialized hardware on the video card that is made to do those calculations very quickly, computers equipped with future video cards will be able to draw scenes with many times more polygons than can be done now. My guess would be that the hot hardware of late this year will transform and light 10 million polygons a second or more.

Another major advance for video cards is a ramping-up of multitexture capabilities. Modern cards with "multitexturing" can draw two pixels per clock cycle, but that will likely become four or even six or eight pixels per clock in the next generation. This means that games that blend many textures together quite often (like *Quake III Arena*, *Unreal*-engine games, and virtually every other future game) will run much faster without having to make drastic increases in the clock speed of the card. Of course, clock speeds will get faster as well.

With all the hoopla over the supposed characteristics of next-generation console systems, it's hard to see that the PC will compete quite well when console systems are being announced well over a year in advance and new PC hardware is rarely announced more than six months in advance. I think, though, that the real-world performance of a well-equipped PC will best the real-world performance of the Dreamcast, Playstation 2, or "Dolphin" at the time that they are released.



Divad Llewop

**Q:** I recently read your article on upgrading your system without having to buy a new processor. You said to overlock your processor you can either increase the bus speed, increase the multiplier or both. I don't know that much about changing things in my computer, and was wondering if you could give me a walk-through on how to overlock my system.

Matt A

**A:** First, it's "over*clock*" and not "over*lock*." It's named that way because you're running the *clock* speed *over* the certified specification. As for a walkthrough of how to do it—sorry, I can't do that. Overclocking your processor voids the warranty, makes your system less stable, and can quite possibly cause data corruption if your system locks up in the middle of something important two hours after it has been running flawlessly. In short, while it is a possible course of action to get a little more life out of an aging system, it's definitely not something you should attempt if you admit that you "don't know that much about changing things in my computer." I probably was too detailed even in the sketchy information I gave to the reader whose letter I answered in issue 102.

I said to him, "If you have you ask if you should overclock your system, the answer is no." I should have added "if you have to ask *how* to do it, the answer is a so no." If you really have your heart set on it, there are plenty of tutorials and guides to overclocking available on the Web. With the help of a search engine, it shouldn't be hard to find what you need.

**Q:** I was wondering if you know of any company that makes a force feedback joystick for left-handed people? I have been looking for over a year and can't seem to find one.

Tony C. (Left-Handed Gamer)

**A:** To the best of my knowledge, no company makes a force feedback joystick specifically for left-handed players. The original CH Products force feedback stick was based off the shape of the Flightstick Pro, which was perfectly symmetrical and thus just as good for lefties, but it was a pretty dismal product and certainly nothing you'd want to try to acquire today. If you really have to have force feedback, I'd go for the stick with the closest to symmetrical shape and just live with it. Unfortunately, many sticks have buttons on the left side of the base, making it difficult or impossible for lefties to use those. The market for force feedback products is small enough as it is, and catering to a percentage of that limited market (left-handed people) is probably just not economically feasible. On the other hand, a company might make a lot of money by being the only ones in the business with a stick for lefties... I guess it's time to start a petition.

**Q:** What is the piece of hardware that needs upgrading the most? Also, what is the best CD-ROM drive that you can get for under $70?

Nathan H

**A:** Well, the piece of hardware that needs upgrading the most depends on what you've got naturally. That is, if what you mean by "needs upgrading the most" is "needs to be upgraded more badly than anything else." Quite a few readers write us asking what video card will turn their 200MHz Pentium machines into big bad gaming rigs, and while we don't like to tell them not to go buy a video card, the processor is generally the limiting factor for games. A good gaming system needs a fast processor (350MHz or faster), plenty of RAM (64MB or more), and a good video card. Plenty of other things help, but that's a good place to start.

If by your question you mean "what needs to be upgraded the most often," then the answer is, beyond a doubt, the video card. Those who make small incremental jumps in processor performance may find that they need to buy a new one every six months, but generally speaking, a fast high-end processor will be good for gaming for a year to 18 months, maybe even longer. It all depends on how much speed you need. On the other hand, the latest greatest fastest video cards are made obsolete every 6–8 months when the new generation of video cards is released. You might get away with buying a "best available" video card one spring and play all games pretty well until the next, but most games really only look and operate as the designers intended on something that isn't very old. You don't need to buy a new video card every time one is released, but within a couple months of a new "generation" of cards from multiple vendors, it's probably time to upgrade if you want to stay on the leading edge.

As for your second question. $70 is enough to buy just about any IDE 40X CD-ROM, and most of them perform pretty much in the same area. Remember, your CD-ROM speed basically affects one thing: install time. When streaming movies, your CD-ROM speed makes no difference, once it's 8x or faster. The movie is going to take a set time to play, regardless. Naturally, CD audio only requires 1X speed. Shop around online... there are plenty of great CD-ROMS for around $50.

***ERRATA:*** **in our July issue we incorrectly rated the Voodoo 3000. The correct rating appears below.**

***VOODOO3 3000***

**MANUFACTURER** 3dfx

**MSRP** $179

**RATING** ★★★★☆

## Cybermopolis

### 3dfx and STB Systems Complete Merger

**—The STB and 3dfx merger is a done deal. Under the terms of the merger first announced Dec. 14, 1998, shareholders of STB Systems will receive 0.65 of a share of 3dfx Interactive common stock for each share of STB Systems common stock. Based on the number of shares of STB Systems common stock outstanding, 3dfx Interactive expects to issue approximately 8,270,000 shares of 3dfx Interactive common stock in connection with the acquisition of STB Systems.**

**"With the merger behind us, 3dfx will accelerate its efforts to deliver powerful new technologies for games, entertainment and more," said Greg Ballard, president and chief executive officer of 3dfx Interactive. "We will aggressively pursue every opportunity to lead this market as the most innovative manufacturer of 3D graphics technology."**

### NVIDIA & Acclaim Strategic Alliance

**—NVIDIA and Acclaim Entertainment announced at the Electronic Entertainment Expo that they have entered into a strategic alliance geared towards leveraging their respective strengths in hardware and software development to create games that utilize NVIDIA's hardware.**

**The agreement will see both companies collaborate on technical issues relating to software and hardware properties and jointly participate in various marketing activities and promotions. According to both companies, this strategic alliance enables NVIDIA and Acclaim to anticipate and plan for key changes in product plans as well as influence the design of both software and hardware.**

**"Given the dynamics of radically increasing 3D horsepower and the long development cycles of the game industry, it's vital that we work closely with key developers and publishers to maximize the value of the combined products," said Michael Hara, vice president of corporate marketing at NVIDIA. "Acclaim is one of the most recognized publishers in the game industry, and we are truly excited about the opportunity to take the gaming genre to the next level with them."**

**The relationship will provide Acclaim with unfettered access to NVIDIA's current and future hardware, software and development tools to maximize image quality and performance under Microsoft's Direct3D and SGI's OpenGL Application Programming Interfaces (API).**

**Wicked 3D Leaves Hardware Arena-Wicked3D, a division of Metabyte, announced that all Wicked3D hardware product lines will be discontinued. The company will continue to support current Wicked3D customers, but will no longer produce any more graphics cards. The company claims that they want to shift their focus back to software development.**

**"We feel that it would be much more beneficial for the industry and for us if we concentrate on doing what we do best - and that is to develop software technology and allow others to bring it to market.," says Steve Gleitsmann, former Director of Worldwide Sales and newly appointed General Manager of Wicked3D. "■**

# Maxi Gamer Xentor

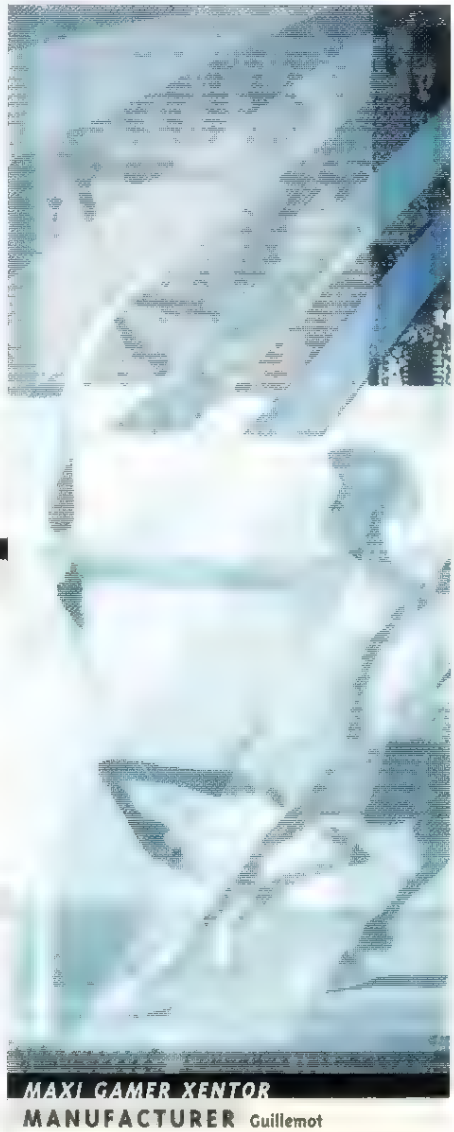
*It's as if you could overclock your current TNT card really far*

How time flies in the hardware world, especially with respect to video cards. It seems like just yesterday we were praising the Riva TNT chipset from NVIDIA for being one of the fastest, most feature-complete video products available. Now our thirst for ever-increasing speed has increased, and NVIDIA has given us the TNT2 to satisfy us. Like it's main competing chipsets this spring, the Voodoo3 and Savage4, the TNT2 chipset is not a radical new design. rather, it's an update of previous technology. In fact, TNT2 is less different from the original TNT than even those other designs. Typically, such an incremental step would be frowned upon in the face of greater advancements by the competition, but this isn't necessarily true in the case of NVIDIA's latest. The TNT was one of the most feature-complete, fast, and all-around capable chips released last fall. Features like full 32-bit color support, stencil buffer, 32 bit z buffer, and support for large texture sizes made the TNT ahead of it's time. The minor capabilities added to the TNT2 are sufficient to keep it line with the rest of the crowd.

Having said that, there are a few things TNT2 brings to the table. The first is support for up to 32MB of memory, doubling the previous limit of 16MB. It also includes the potential for AGP 4x support, which is meaningless right now, but will be a boon when AGP4x-enabled motherboards become common. It's also capable of digital flat panel output, but like AGP 4x and 32MB configurations, this is something which card manufacturers have to choose to support. TNT2 cards generally come in two flavors, a standard "TNT2" which is specd by NVIDIA to run at 125MHz, and a "TNT2 Ultra" which is specd to run at 150MHz. Naturally, card manufacturers may stray from these recommended speeds.

Which brings us to the Maxi Gamer Xentor. One of the first TNT2-based cards available, it's basically a plain-vanilla 125MHz TNT2 (the memory is clocked at 166MHz). It includes AGP 2x support, 16MB of RAM, and a 300MHz RAMDAC that can drive displays up to 1920x1400 in 32bit color, or 2048x1536 in 16bit color. Refresh rates vary from a maximum of 240Hz at low resolutions up to 60Hz at the highest, which is far more than most users' monitors can handle. If all of this sounds just like a regular TNT-based card, only faster, it should. That's essentially what the Maxi Gamer Xentor is. Even the drivers are readily recognizable as NVIDIA reference drivers with little more than the Guillemot name slapped on them. No clock speed adjustment sliders, special controls, or fancy custom layout. This isn't necessarily a poor choice, however—the NVIDIA reference drivers have all the important color and gamma adjustment controls, as well as necessary tweaks for Direct3D or OpenGL performance. Using branded reference drivers lets Guillemot bring a new driver revision to their customers very quickly after receiving an update to the NVIDIA reference set. Still, power users who want to mess with more options will have to look elsewhere.

What makes the Maxi Gamer Xentor really shine is its value. The $129 price is what most TNT-based cards cost just a few weeks ago. For that price, Guillemot delivers what is essentially a TNT that runs over a third faster and has crisper 2D output. They help sweeten the deal with some bundled software. The only full-version software included is the Xing SoftDVD player. Demos for *Monaco Grand Prix Racing 2*, *S.C.A.R.S.*, *Speed Busters*, and the long-delayed *Tonic Trouble* are included as well. Though not the most exciting bundle in the world, it helps add even more value to a well-priced product. Those waiting for the ultimate high-speed TNT2 card should wait for a faster model, but gamers who don't want to spend much money on really great 2D/3D acceleration need look no further. —*Jason Cross*



**MAXI GAMER XENTOR**

**MANUFACTURER** Guillemot

**MSRP** $129

**RATING** ★★★★☆

**DATA:**

**Baseline is a 16MB Riva TNT, NVIDIA reference drivers, vsync off. Unreal used OpenGL.**

| Riva TNT 16bit color | 640x480 | 800x600 | 1024x768 |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Quake2 v 3.20* | 63.6 | 58.3 | 41.4 |
| *Unreal v 224* | 27.3 | 25.3 | 22.0 |
| 3D Mark 99 MAX | 3077 | 3090 | 2713 |
| 2D Business Winbench 99 | NA | 126 | 120 |
| **Riva TNT 32bit color** | **640x480** | **800x600** | **1024x768** |
| *Quake2 v 3.20* | 62 | 50.4 | 32.7 |
| *Unreal v 224* | 25.6 | 20.8 | 15.2 |
| 3D Mark 99 MAX | 3089 | 2817 | 1942 |
| 2D Business Winbench 99 | NA | 121 | 114 |

**All tests for the Maxi Gamer Xentor were performed with vsync off. Unreal used OpenGL.**

| Xentor 16bit color | 640x480 | 800x600 | 1024x768 |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Quake2 v 3.20* | 80 9 | 77.1 | 63 |
| *Unreal v 220* | 28.6 | 26.8 | 25.2 |
| 3D Mark 99 MAX | 3146 | 3146 | 3149 |
| 2D Business Winbench 99 | NA | 133 | 127 |
| **Xentor 32bit color** | **640x480** | **800x600** | **1024x768** |
| *Quake2 v 3.20* | 76.2 | 56.6 | 40.3 |
| *Unreal v 220* | 27.6 | 26.8 | 22 |
| 3D Mark 99 MAX | 3127 | 3123 | 3126 |
| 2D Business Winbench 99 | NA | 128 | 125 |

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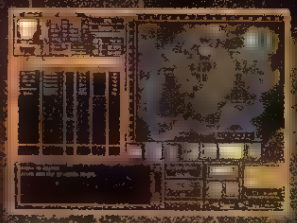
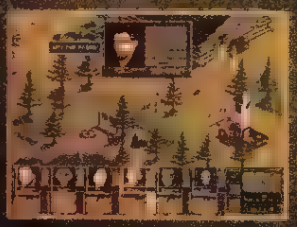


Fight to liberate an entire nation sector by sector, town by town.



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SIRTECH TALONSOFT

# Rage Fury

*If I was this late coming to market, I'd be mad too*

It wasn't supposed to happen this way. ATI was going to bring a product to market that wouldn't just be an economical solution for OEM customers, it would be a true gaming powerhouse. It would have all the features everyone wants, twice the memory of competing products, and it would be affordable. Most importantly, it would be as fast or faster than anything else on the market. That was late last year, when previews of the card praised it's beefy 32MB memory limit and stellar 3D performance in 32-bit color modes. At that time, the card was going to ship in a few weeks' time. Weeks turned into months, and the Rage Fury shipped later than anticipated.

Due to the delay, the product was released in a timeframe where the competition (TNT2, Savage4, and Voodoo3) clearly outperform it. Performance isn't poor, though. In 16-bit color modes, it was often faster than our baseline TNT, and sometimes a little slower. However, it quite typically outpaced the TNT by a small margin in 32-bit color, especially at higher resolutions. These are small performance gains compared to the leap delivered by other recently-released video cards. Drivers appear to be pretty stable and solid, with no real problems in almost any application. Cards based on new chip technologies always have *some* teething problems with drivers, though, and the Rage Fury is no exception. The biggest error came when trying to run the *Unreal* v224 in OpenGL mode. The newly-reworked OpenGL code in this version of Unreal is a significant improvement over old non-GL code API support, but we couldn't get it to work on the Rage Fury. The game crashed upon load with either the certified release drivers or the latest beta revision. There were no visible problems in other OpenGL games such as *Half-Life* or *Quake II*. Given the hardware's operating specs, there is probably room for some additional speed due to driver refinement.

Speed isn't the only reason to buy a video card, of course. The Rage Fury has nearly every feature a hardware buff could want. It was the first mainstream video card to market with 32MB of memory, and while current games don't tax the 16MB limit too heavily, upcoming titles with higher-resolution textures will make users grateful for the extra RAM. It'll drive your display at resolutions up to 1920x1200 in full 32bit color, at a refresh rate of 76Hz. Refresh rates for lower resolutions scale all the way up to 200Hz. Both 2D and 3D image quality is impressive, with smooth vibrant colors and clean filtering. All the requisite features are supported: AGP texturing, single-pass multitexturing, 32-bit Z-buffer, stencil buffer, and DVD hardware acceleration. In fact, the DVD acceleration on the Rage Fury is better than most. Most video cards that claim "hardware DVD acceleration" only do scaling and YUV to RGB color conversion in hardware, still requiring a speedy Pentium II processor to play those fast-action DVD movies at high resolution without dropping frames. Like the Savage3D and Savage4, the Rage128 chipset powering the Rage Fury also performs motion compensation in hardware, lowering CPU utilization dramatically. Those gamers who want TV-out capabilities will be pleased to know that the Rage Fury not only does TV-out, but even comes with S-video and composite video cables.

The Rage Fury lists with a suggested retail price of about $200, which is quite pricey, but the card is being widely discounted. ATI heaps build-in some value with bundled software. In addition to the requisite eye-candy demo and DVD-player software, you'll find *Moto Racer 2*, *Half-Life Day One*, and *Expendable Lite* in the box. One can't help but feel that the bundle is a bit dated, and just another sign of a product that shipped later than planned. It's always nice to get free software and product demos, but when the competition is shipping exclusive demos of unreleased games, the freebies in ATI's box are underwhelming.

ATI's Rage Fury has plenty going for it. It's got all the major features necessary for current and upcoming games, 32MB of RAM, TV-out, DVD-acceleration, and a reasonable, if dated, software bundle. Unfortunately, the price is a little steep for a card that performs only slightly better than most Riva TNT-based cards. This isn't a great choice for power gamers who have hot rod machines and accept only the fastest components. The excellent 32bit color speed and 32MB of memory might help extend the life of slower Pentium II class machines, though. Perhaps the most significant benefit of this product is to the industry as a whole—ATI was the last major card manufacturer to ship a product that truly delivered quality 3D acceleration, and now that they've come "on board," the baseline for the industry has moved up.

*Jason Cross*

**DATA:**

**Baseline is a 16MB Riva TNT, NVIDIA reference drivers, vsync off. Unreal used OpenGL.**

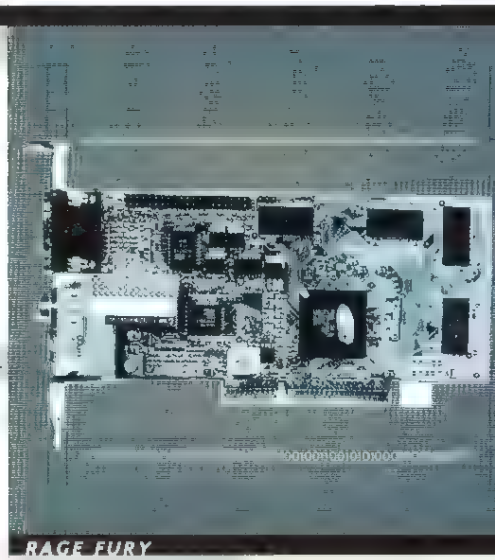
| Riva TNT 16bit color | 640x480 | 800x600 | 1024x768 |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Quake2 v 3.20* | 63.6 | 58.3 | 41.4 |
| *Unreal v 224* | 27.3 | 5.3 | 22.0 |
| 3D Mark 99 MAX | 3077 | 3090 | 2713 |
| 2D Business Winbench 99 | NA | 126 | 120 |

| Riva TNT 32bit color | 640x480 | 800x600 | 1024x768 |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Quake2 v 3.20* | 62 | 50.4 | 32.7 |
| *Unreal v 224* | 25.6 | 20.8 | 15.2 |
| 3D Mark 99 MAX | 3089 | 2817 | 1942 |
| 2D Business Winbench 99 | NA | 121 | 114 |

**All tests for the ATI Rage Fury were performed with vsync off. Unreal OpenGL failed on version 224, so Direct3D was used.**

| Rage Fury 16bit color | 640x480 | 800x600 | 1024x768 |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Quake2 v 3.20* | 54.9 | 52.9 | 42 |
| *Unreal v 220* | 29.6 | 24.6 | 19.4 |
| 3D Mark 99 MAX | 3170 | 3164 | 3056 |
| 2D Business Winbench 99 | NA | 127 | 122 |

| Rage Fury 32bit color | 640x480 | 800x600 | 1024x768 |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Quake2 v 3.20* | 53.4 | 52.1 | 35.1 |
| *Unreal v 220* | 29.1 | 24.3 | 17.7 |
| 3D Mark 99 MAX | 3164 | 3150 | 2591 |
| 2D Business Winbench 99 | NA | 120 | 117 |



*RAGE FURY*

**MANUFACTURER** ATI

**MSRP** $199

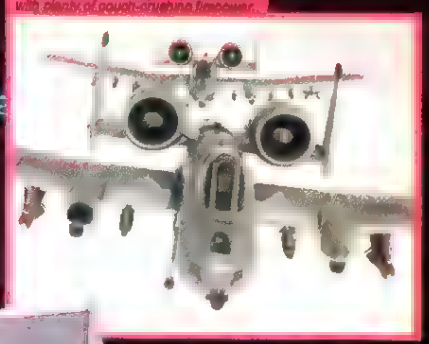
**RATING** ★★★☆☆

# DOUG JUST DECLARED EVERYTHING NORTH OF YOUR COUCH A "NO-FLY ZONE"

To get F-16 Falcon simulation mercilessly [illegible] your bedroom routes with unbelievable [illegible]



Your couch: Unlikely flashpoint of a simulated war. On the humanity



Doug a Falcon Gemini [illegible] with plenty of couch-crushing firepower.

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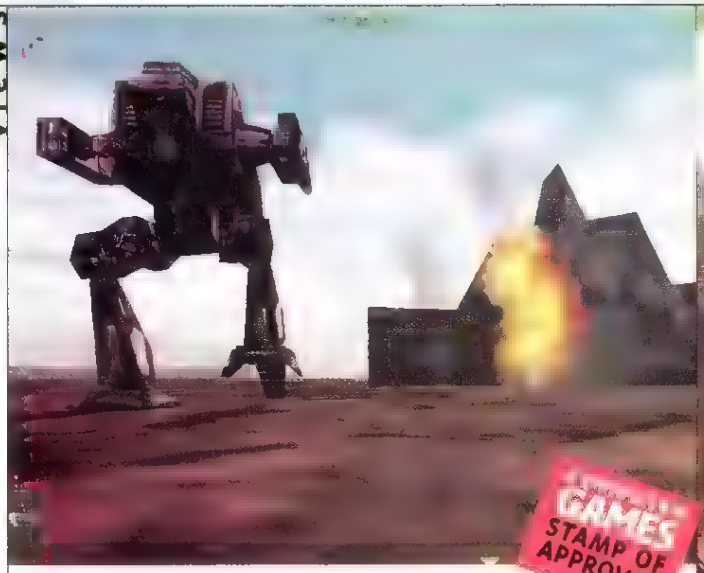


COMPUTER GAMES STAMP OF APPROVAL

**UPSIDE**

Excellent sim feel, tense combat, interesting missions, interactive environments

**DOWNSIDE**

Single player campaign is too short, no in-mission saves

[far left] The game's external views are functional—weapons can be aimed and fired from this perspective

[above] Friendly 'Mechs can be repaired and rearmed during missions through use of the Mobile Field Base

[left] The radar map features both active and passive modes, and like past MechWarrior games it can be expanded to fill the HUD

# MechWarrior 3

## *The third time for this series is a charmer*

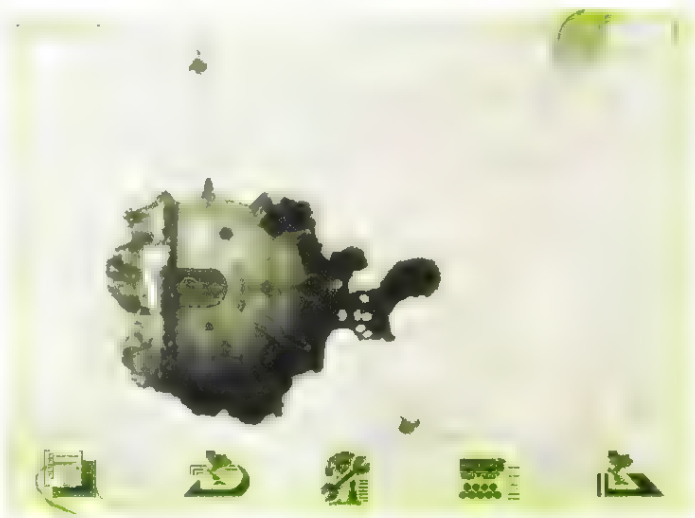
It is no mean feat that each new iteration of the *MechWarrior* series has managed to improve upon the accomplishments of the last. All the past games have come from the Activision stable, however, and news that FASA had re-licensed the *Battletech* based series to MicroProse raised no small amount of concern over where the franchise might be heading. Would the next *MechWarrior* title stay true to the hard-core simulation style of play that made its predecessors popular?

Fans will be relieved to hear that the answer is an emphatic "yes." Developed by Zipper Interactive, *MechWarrior 3* honors the tradition of steady improvement by weighing in as the best *Battletech* game—and possibly the best Mech sim—ever made for the PC.

From the moment the game starts it is evident that Zipper has treated the FASA property (and by the same token, *MechWarrior* fans) with the same respect that Activision has in the past. The opening movie is so similar to *MechWarrior 2's* in style and fiery flare that you will find yourself double-checking the box to make sure that MicroProse really did publish this game. Indeed the similarities run deeper than the printing on the box—from the HUD to the mission objectives to the overall visual style of the game, there is enough of *MechWarrior 2* and *Mercenaries* in the game itself to make the change in publishers irrelevant.

Of the changes that the game does feature, almost all are improvements. Without making the game significantly more complex, Zipper has improved on the "sim" feel of the game to a great degree. A number of simple but very useful additions to the interface contribute to this. Radar now features multiple modes; active radar works as it has in past games, but passive radar makes your 'Mech more difficult to detect at the expense of reduced range (shutting down entirely is still the most effective way of eluding enemy sensors). The targeting reticule can be expanded into a small but effective zoom view that's so useful for long-distance targeting that players will wonder how they ever got along without it. Aiming options have been expanded as well—the traditional torso twist is still a vital combat element, but now players can also "unlock" the targeting reticule and aim it independently of torso orientation via mouse or joystick. Weapon locations play a larger role in this aiming mode—it is impossible to aim left with a weapon mounted on a 'Mech's right arm short of torso twisting in the appropriate direction. A new twist has been added to heat management as well—'Mechs now feature coolant reserves that can be dumped to instantly reduce heat to zero. The catch is that the reserve only holds enough coolant to allow players to do this three times before they have to visit their Mobile Field Base to fill up.

From a tactical standpoint, the Mobile Field Base (MFB) itself is one of the most interesting new features. The three trundling tracked vehicles that make up the MFB resemble the Jawas' sandcrawler from *Star Wars*, and they serve a similar function. As a transport for spare 'Mechs, salvaged parts, and repair crews, the MFB is the lifeblood of any extended field operation. Each of the three vehicles that make up the MFB can carry two 'Mechs and up to 300 tons of salvaged weapons, armor, and equipment. The MFB accompanies the player on missions to gather salvage, and the player can order the MFB to travel to preset rendezvous points and set up for field



Mission briefings are given while the mission is loading, conveniently diverting attention away from load times

**MECHWARRIOR 3**

**GENRE** Mech Simulation

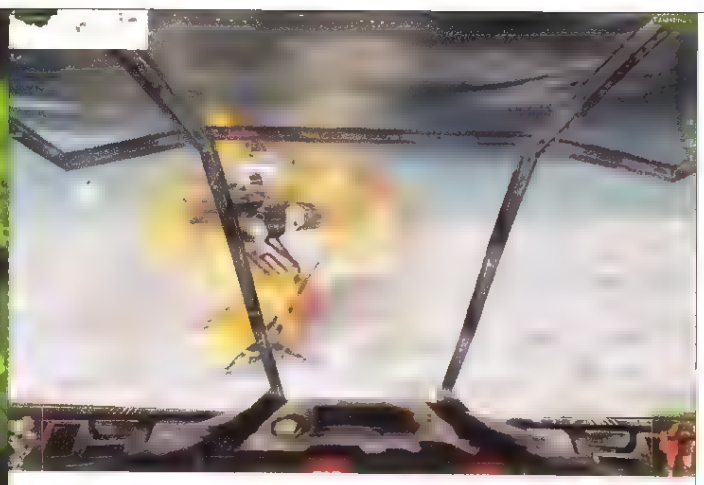
**PUBLISHER** MicroProse

**REQUIREMENTS** Windows 95/98, 166 MHz Pentium, 32 MB of RAM, 2X CD-ROM

**MULTIPLAYER** 2-8 players, Internet, LAN, modem, null-modem

**RATING** ★★★★½

Players can configure both their own and lancemate's 'Mechs via use of the 'Mech Lab



Although all the action takes place on a single world, players will see a variety of terrain, lighting, and weather effects

repairs. Any friendly 'Mech can meet the MFB at the designated waypoint and power down to receive an extensive refit. The MFB lacks the ability to reattach limbs, but it can repair armor damage, refill coolant tanks and assuming the required ammo is available, resupply ammo reserves. Ordering the MFB into a hot area is generally a bad idea—enemy 'Mechs will target MFB vehicles if they see them, and the loss of an MFB results in a corresponding loss in carrying capacity. Lost MFB vehicles are replaced at certain points in the campaign, but having to do without one, even for a short time, creates serious logistical headaches.

One thing that will not create logistical headaches (not in a bad way, at least) is the game's salvage engine. While players do not earn money for completing missions, they do gain salvage and new 'Mechs that can be carried in the MFB and used to augment offensive capabilities of both the player and AI lancemates. Better still, salvage seems to be dynamic (or at least more random)—playing the same mission twice results in varied bounties, and to a certain extent the salvage seems to be predicated on player actions within a mission.

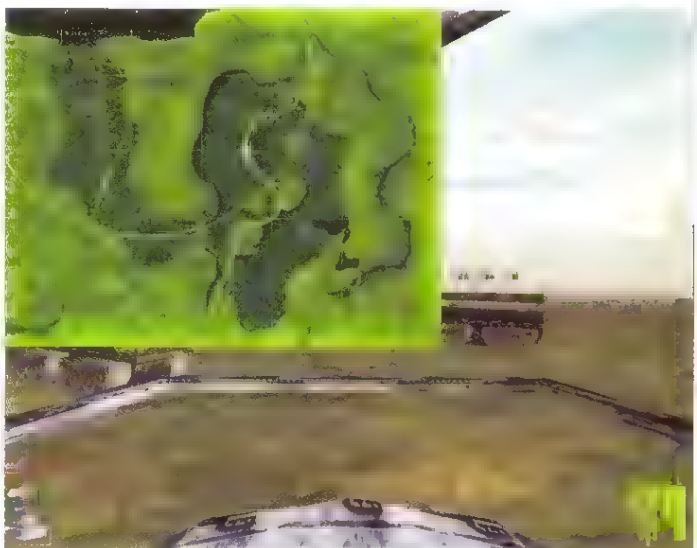
Engineer wannabes will be pleased to see that 'Mech building is still a vital element in the game. More so, perhaps, given the wide assortment of weapons and equipment that the player has to choose from. It is quite easy to spend more time in the 'Mech Lab than you do in the missions, and with 900 tons of salvage to work with, the Lab is a tweaker's dream come true.

Some players may complain about the absence of a few features from the Activision games—*MechWarrior 3* has no nightvision mode (despite the presence of several night missions), and the wireframe view mode is now a thing of the past. It is a lamentable omission, but as far as omissions when you compare the significance of features dropped to the solid utility of features gained, however, is forgivable. The brevity of the game—it is a fun ride, but a short one. The single-player campaign is broken down into four "operations" of four to six missions each, for a miserly total of 20 missions. The missions are fairly lengthy, but no more so than those of the recent *X-Wing Alliance*, a game that offered more than 50 single player missions, as well as a beefy [illegible] instant action maps and eight multiplayer maps helped sweeten the pot, but they are not really a replacement for another 15 campaign missions. The lack of an in-mission save feature adds a few hours of playtime, but not really in a [illegible] way (fortunately game difficulty can be adjusted on the fly).

Few in number though they may be, the missions are all well crafted. The campaign tells the story of a drop gone awry—an Eridani Light Horse commando offensive against Clan Smoke Jaguar presence in the Inner Sphere meets with unexpected resistance, leaving the player to save the day. The story is obviously not the game's strong point, but it does provide an ample wrapper for a series of interesting missions that take the player over and under the surface of the planet Tranquil. The missions are nicely varied, especially considering the [illegible] for the game's [illegible]. Defensive missions are rare as are those protecting the MFB's constant defensive consideration. The campaign features a good variety of terrain types as well. Missions may take the player over plains and through mountain installations, into the arctic region of the planet and through the caulderas of an active volcano. The player picks up additional lancemates as the campaign progresses (up to a total of three). A workable command interface allows the player to issue orders to groups of lancemates, but the AI does a fair job of directing them even without player assistance (enemy AI is equally adept). Players seeking more devious opponents will want to check out the multiplayer maps, which support both deathmatch and team play over Microsoft's Gaming Zone or via direct connection.

*MechWarrior 3* may not boast the most sophisticated 3D engine on the market, but it has the right touches in all the right places. The mission areas are large, and many of them pose tactically interesting challenges (in one mission it is possible to trap the bulk of the enemy force on the south side of a ravine by taking out strategic bridges). Sky textures are attractive, and while the polygon count in the terrain is not increased by high-res deformable (large explosions leave gigantic craters). Best of all, the environments are replete with stomp-able objects. Foot soldiers and seagulls, villas and bridges, trees and telephone poles—all fall before the unstoppable bulk of your 'Mech. Adding to the visceral appeal are the 'Mech models themselves. This is obviously where the visual and visceral flare of the game is focused—the 'Mechs are increasingly detailed as well as differentiated, both inside and out. Cockpit art, height, and even the way the various 'Mechs move are strongly differentiated. All of the 'Mechs react noticeably to physical force—firing an autocannon produces recoil in the appropriate location, 'Mechs limp on damaged legs, . everything "feels" just right.

*MechWarrior 3* has all the right touches in all the right places, and it is almost a compliment to say that it ends too soon. Zipper has several add-ons in the works, hopefully these will give extended play value to a game that certainly deserves it. *–Benjamin E. Sones*



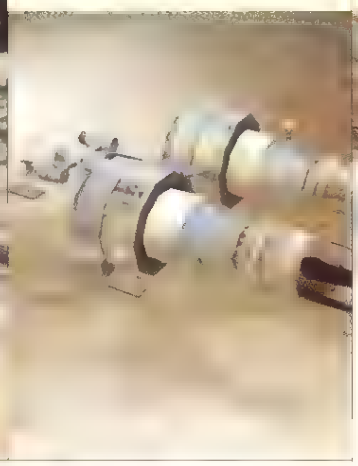
A satellite map allows the player to see the entire mission area while still piloting the 'Mech

**UPSIDE**

Fulfills a serious need for speed, wonderful track design, that Star Wars thing...

**DOWNSIDE**

Not much replayability, too easy, only supports LAN, console residue



[far left] 815 MPH—yeeeehaw!

[above] Behold the mighty Neva Kee's pod

[left] This view is perfect if you're on the new "binge/purge" supermodel diet

[below] Because you can never have too many "Repulsogrips"

# Star Wars Episode I–Racer

## *Fulfilling your need for Star Wars speed*

**THE BUZZ**

***"...it is fast. Overall I say this game is excellent. For "a racer" it's really cool, not just any ordinary game. I'd give it 4 outta 5 stars!" —Lord Jarec***

***"This game kicks-ass for the PC." —Reaper***

It was easy to be skeptical about LucasArts' decision to release two games based on *The Phantom Menace* at the same time as the movie. Gamers accustomed to a multi-year delay from movie to game couldn't help but wonder if the finished products would be polished, of respectable quality, and perhaps most importantly would feel rushed. *Star Wars Episode I–Racer* answers all of those questions with an assertive yes. While it's not as good as the more refined, more PC-centric "classic" *Star Wars* products like *X-Wing Alliance* and *Jedi Knight*, it's considerably better than some of the past cross-platform arcade fluff produced by LucasArts

*Racer* recreates the pod race scene on Tatooine from the movie. You pilot what is essentially a small, thin, pod that is attached to two giant aircraft style engines of some indeterminate means of propulsion. While it's hard to tell what the resulting concoction should actually feel like in a physics sense, the game gives the pods the handling of a Jet Ski from *Jet Moto*. While a more interesting physics model that took into account the momentum inherent in a craft of this design would have been welcome, it's entirely possible that such a simulation is beyond the capabilities of a Nintendo 64, the platform that shares the game

Another residual effect of the game's cross-platform nature, and the only aspect of the game that even begins to point to a rush job, is the mix between high- and low-resolution text on some of the menus. There's also a consistency problem in the interface—some functions allow you to use the mouse while others force you to use the keyboard or joystick.

The game starts with only a few tracks available, and more are unlocked as you win races (there are 21 tracks in all). Upon winning a race in the campaign you also win the track record holder's pod, which can then be used in subsequent races. Between races you can upgrade your pod by visiting Watto's junk shop, but the game's mishandling of the in-race repair function makes this aspect of the game somewhat unsatisfying Repairing during a race is pointless—you're better off just crashing it into a wall, as the recovery takes less time (and hassle) than shutting down an engine and repairing it For that reason you can focus on engine and turning improvements while ignoring repair modifications when upgrading your pod.

The game initially feels quite easy—perhaps too easy. You probably won't lose a race until about midway through the "Semi-pro" circuit. At this point you'll realize that it is important to match the pod to both the track and your particular race style (i.e. if you run into walls a lot, get a pod with quick acceleration at the expense of top speed). Once armed with this knowledge, you may find yourself winning races on the first try on even the "invitational" level tracks

This is somewhat surprising given the game's wonderfully twisted (in a literal sense) and complex tracks The races take place on eight different worlds, and each has a unique series of tracks that often share certain segments (*a la Need for Speed III*) but never feel like mere rehashes (*a la Ultimate Race Pro*). Some are incredibly long and most have multiple paths, some of which can save you time or even add to it. But even with the superb design, certain pods seem to have an advantage Neva Kee's is the most unbalanced, featuring amazing acceleration and the ability to turn on a dime

The most obviously appealing aspect of the game is its superb simulation of speed. The pods travel at 400-500 MPH, and can reach speeds near 1000 MPH with their boost enabled. As you twist and turn your way around the tracks, you'll be amazed at how quick you can react to, for example, a closing door or a protruding wall Graphics purists can and will pick apart the 3D engine that drives this game pointing out its myriad deficiencies—for every slick 3D effect you'll notice two ugly ones However, the engine gets the job done and runs superbly on low-end 3D accelerated hardware

As with a game like *Wipeout XL*, *Racer*'s combination of incredible speed and atmosphere is intoxicating. Having the *Star Wars* license gives the game an indelible boost, giving it an ambiance (usually via its superb audio) most games would die for. While it lacks the longevity (and Internet play) of other race games, it delivers plenty of short term thrills for even the most jaded race game fan. *Steve Bauman*

**STAR WARS EPISODE I–RACER**

**GENRE** Arcade Racing

**PUBLISHER** LucasArts

**REQUIREMENTS** Windows 95/98, 166MHz Pentium or higher, 32MB of RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 3D Accelerator

**MULTIPLAYER** 2-8 players, LAN

**RATING** ★★★½

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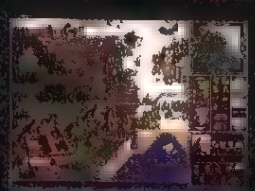

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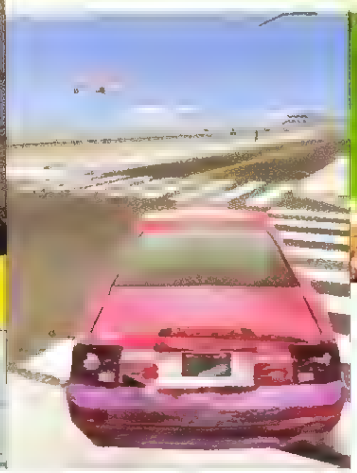
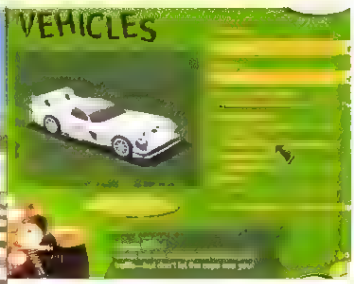
**UPSIDE**

Interactive and expansive environment, entertaining multiplayer race modes

**DOWNSIDE**

Shallow physics and performance models, difficult single-player races with largely random outcomes






Call the police! Somebody stole the lion statues from the front of the Art Institute!

A jumbo jet taking off from Meigs Field? Whatever...

The game features ten different vehicles for the player to drive (some better than others)

Jumping the Chicago River while the bridges are up is an... uplifting... experience

# Midtown Madness

## *Spinning wheels in the windy city*

**THE BUZZ**

***I was extremely disappointed to hear that there is no traffic in multiplayer mode. After all, that's what gives the game so much personality."***

***—John Hanley***

*Midtown Madness* wants to be a great game. It is obvious that the developers put a lot of care into their design, and it has far more polish than the average cookie-cutter racing game. The premise is riddled with great ideas, and many of them are skillfully implemented, but like the proverbial straw-toting camel the game is hampered by a few significant problems.

The centerpiece of the game is its setting—a living city that recreates the streets of downtown Chicago in a massive, non-linear map that serves as the setting for all the game's races. Different races follow different courses through the city, but it is often possible to deviate from the marked course in search of your own shortcut. It is obvious that the designers have had little first-hand experience with the windy city—major landmarks such as the Water Tower and Navy Pier are faithfully represented, but many streets, intersections, and minor buildings have a glossed over feel.

Inaccuracies aside, the city feels real enough for the purposes of a racing game. Pedestrians and traffic choke the streets as they go about their daily business, regulated by changing traffic lights. The sidewalks are lined with street signs, garbage cans, trees, newspaper vendors... and they are all interactive. The visceral feel of taking a shortcut across a plaza, plowing through obstacles and innocent bystanders with equal abandon, is difficult to dismiss. Some objects are indestructible, but most of the game's miscellaneous scenery will succumb to off-road onslaughts in a satisfying fashion. Garbage and newspaper machines explode in clouds of litter and newsprint, and pedestrians freeze like deer and then dive for cover (it is not possible to actually hit a pedestrian—the game is strictly a "PG" venture). Other cars are equally interactive, and depending on traffic density, fender benders and full-blown pileups are common.

There lies one of *Midtown Madness*' most prominent problems. Many of the races are gruelingly difficult, and even at amateur level the time limits for completing blitz and checkpoint races are far too severe. In such situations traffic is more of an annoyance than a challenge. Traffic patterns vary from race to race, and because even a single accident often results in the loss of the race, success in races that involve traffic is reduced to coin-toss randomness. Circuit races avoid the problem by eliminating random traffic altogether, but they eliminate the game's living city appeal in the process. A better solution would be to increase the race time limits to allow for random acts of traffic—even a greater degree of variation in the game's two difficulty settings would not be amiss.

Variation between the different cars in the game is ample—each car has its own look, sound, and feel. The city bus is slow but has a lot of mass and momentum, the Panoz GTR-1 is fast and twitchy, and its low ground clearance turns even roadside curbs into obstacles. Player cars display damage visually as well—a surprising feature given the reluctance that most auto manufacturers have when it comes to showing their products in less-than-perfect condition. A good variety of cars (from the Volkswagen Beetle to the Mustang GT) are available from the start, but special vehicles such as the bus and the GTR-1 have to be unlocked before they can be driven.

Overall physics modeling is generally unimpressive. Spin-outs and accidents feel scripted and artificial, and once the rules-based physics engine has decided that you have lost control of your vehicle, it is impossible to do anything other than ride it out and hope for the best. Better hope to avoid police patrols while you are at it—police cruisers will relentlessly chase and ram your car, cheerfully disregarding public safety and the laws of physics. These uber-police are able to accelerate from zero to sixty in less than a second, and apparently maintain their grip on the road by magical means.

Internet play is a saving grace for this game—a multiplayer-only "cops and robbers" race variant makes up for a lot of shortcomings in the single-player races. Players choose teams (cop or robber) or go it alone in a race to recover a bar of gold and carry it back to their headquarters. It has all the excitement and chaos of a downtown car chase, with less of the frustrating randomness of the single-player race modes. It is a pity that this variant is not present in the single-player games—it might have brought this title closer to the greatness it deserves.

*—Benjamin E. Sones*

**MIDTOWN MADNESS**

**GENRE** Racing

**PUBLISHER** Microsoft

**REQUIREMENTS** Windows 95/98, 200 MHz Pentium, 16 MB of RAM, 2X CD-ROM

**MULTIPLAYER** 2-8 players, Internet, LAN, modem, serial

**RATING** ★★★½☆

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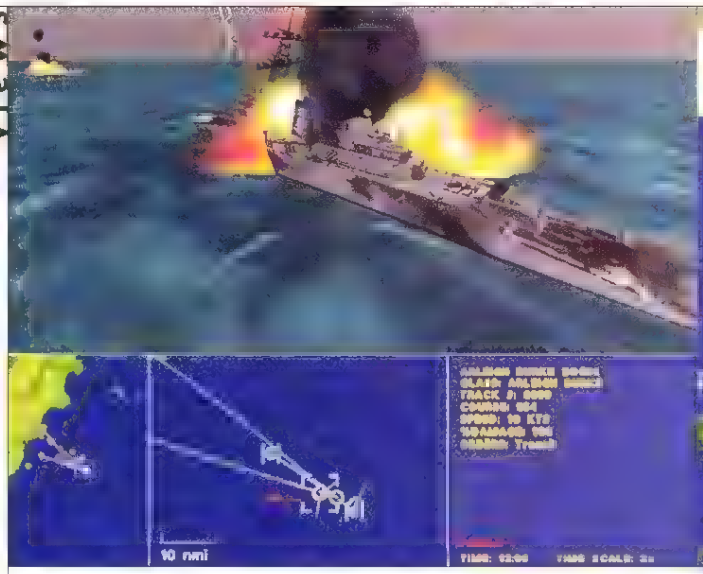
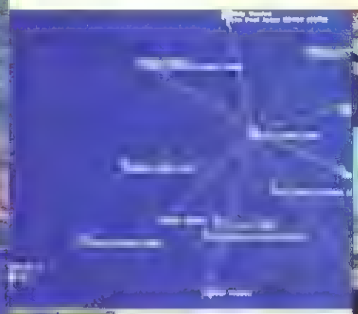
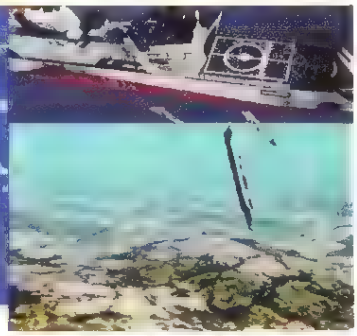






**UPSIDE**

Excellent blend of RTS and action

**DOWNSIDE**

Friendly ships wait until the last moment to defend themselves, often resulting in battle damage or worse

[first] The game includes weather, although it's unclear what tactical and operational effect it has on gameplay

[middle] A carrier battle group arrayed for a fight; the position tags (which may be turned off) act as an integrated and simplified form of Harpoon's formation editor

[last] A sub's-eye view of a fleet that's had a very, very bad day

[left] The full-screen 3D view doesn't offer you any control over the game, but it tells you in a most violet fashion what's happening to the vessels under your command

# Fleet Command

## *Fleet action on the high seas*

With *Fleet Command*, Jane's moves away from the in-the-cockpit simulation genre, putting you instead in the position of Commander of the Fleet. The game combines real-time strategy and action, and gives you control aircraft carriers, destroyers, cruisers, submarines, and all sorts of aircraft—a vast arsenal of ships and weapons are available for would-be Captains. Although not as realistic as *Harpoon*, it delivers fun and exciting game play.

There are four excellent tutorials. Each one takes the player through essential steps to playing the game, and are some of the most thorough seen in a game of this sort. They are thorough enough to allow you to play the game with only a casual glance at the manual. There are over 30 single missions and one campaign consisting of four interrelated scenarios. The Carrier Battle Group starts in the Indian Ocean where India is threatening to invade its island neighbor Sri Lanka. If you survive with a high enough score, you continue to the Strait of Malacca where you face the Chinese and a small Russian fleet, the Taiwan Strait, and the final showdown at the Kuril Islands around Japan where you face a resurgent Red Fleet. After successfully completing each mission your fleet will re-supply, rearm and be reinforced for the next scenario. As you are reinforced after each mission, loss of ships do not seem to affect the next mission in the campaign.

Jane's did a good job on graphic details. There are 3D views of all platforms, weapons, and objects in the game complete with smoke and visible battle damage. You can watch aircraft launch/land, follow missiles/torpedoes to the target, and even watch the rescue of a downed pilot. There is also a detached camera view, a fly-by camera view, and an action camera view. These can all be switched to full screen mode and allow you to view the fast paced action of the game. Each camera view can be rotated for a better view of the action.

The game interface is easy to use. A platform is selected by clicking the left button of the mouse over an object. Clicking the right button of the mouse brings up a menu of commands for that platform. It is a simple matter to select and left click on a command. Multiple platforms can also be selected *a la Command & Conquer* by drawing a box around the craft you wish to select. A simple right click of the mouse then brings up the orders menu for the selected group. There are also a number of hotkeys that help speed up game play and mission orders, which are useful during the heat of battle. The game allows you to issue orders while the game is paused, however you may only issue aircraft launch orders to the aircraft carrier.

The manual is smaller than we're accustomed to getting from Jane's. It's only 45 pages as compared to Jane's 200 page tome. It explains the menus, but lacks the section on combat tactics that Jane's usually includes with their other products.

Ships and planes will automatically launch countermeasures when under attack. However ships will not automatically fire SAM missiles at enemy anti-ship missiles, instead waiting until the last second to fire their close-in air defense guns as the incoming missiles close on the ship. Only if you issue specific fire orders will SAMs be launched at a specific missile. Aircraft react the same way. Aircraft ordered to identify a target will identify it as hostile or neutral and return to patrol. However, if the target is hostile, the aircraft will turn and head for home without firing a shot. In the real world when aircraft or ships are identified as hostile, friendly ships and planes will automatically fire on the enemy without waiting for orders. This lack of self-preservation is annoying but does not detract seriously from game play.

Overall, *Fleet Command* is a good combination RTS and action game which is fun to play. It may not satisfy the hardcore war gamers, but will appeal to the "beer and pretzels" war and action-strategy gamers alike.

*—Hosea Battles*

**THE BUZZ**

***"I like this game. I agree the manual leaves a lot to be desired. It does bother me that when an incoming is identified, a fighter doesn't automatically kill it."***
***—Steve Harris***

***"I'd really hate to have to buy the (hopefully) forthcoming "strategy guide" to learn how to really play this game."***
***—Mark Sterner***

***"I cannot recommend that you buy it unless it undergoes some major patchwork."***
***—Greg Cohen***

**FLEET COMMAND**

**GENRE** Real-time strategy

**PUBLISHER** Jane's Combat Simulations

**REQUIREMENTS** Windows 95/98, 200 MHz Pentium or higher, 32 MB of RAM, 8X CD-ROM, 3D accelerator

**MULTIPLAYER** 2-4 players, Internet, LAN, modem

**RATING** ★★★★

# In 2015 war is declared.

**YOU ARE THE U.S.**

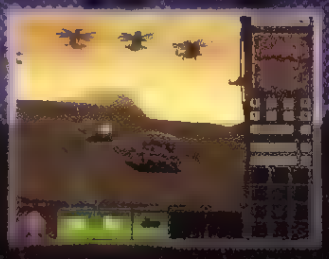
- Intelligence [illegible] Chinese [illegible] unit.
- [illegible] tactical mode. Heads [illegible] helicopters.
- [illegible]
- [illegible] are damaged.
- Move to strategic [illegible]
- [illegible] strike to the East.
- Switch to platoon commander of an electronic warfare unit.

**VICTORY IS IMMINENT.**

**YOU ARE CHINA**

- Mobilize armored units [illegible] Kazakhstan.
- Lay minefields in tactical mode.
- Move to maps. Conduct reconnaissance.
- Mobilize antiaircraft weaponry. Launch air offensive to the North.
- Two tanks are destroyed by U.S. helicopters.
- Return to maps. View U.S. artillery enter minefield.
- Switch to helicopter platoon commander. Head East.

**VICTORY IS IMMINENT.**



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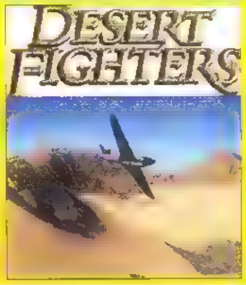


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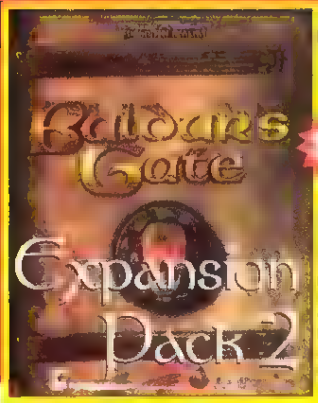


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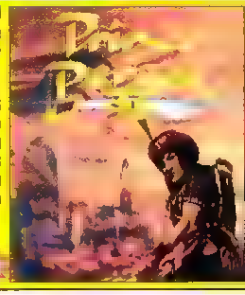


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| American Bass Bkng | 05/99 | $32.99 | FIFA Soccer 2000 | 09/99 | $44.99 | MS Football 2000 | 08/99 | $44.99 | | | |
| American Deer Hunter | 05/99 | $18.99 | Football Mngr | 03/99 | $18.99 | MS Internl Fbal 2000 | 09/99 | $46.99 | PGA Championship Golf | 05/99 | $26.99 |
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| Baseball Mgt Wrld Srs | 12/98 | $28.99 | Front Office Football | 05/99 | $34.99 | MS World Champ Soccer | 05/99 | $44.99 | Rocky Mtn Trphy Hntr 2 | 08/99 | $18.99 |
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| Aeg[illegible] | 04/94 | $19.99 |
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| A[illegible] | [illegible]/98 | $44.99 |
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| Battlegrnd Gett[illegible]rg | 12/95 | $18.99 |
| Battlegrnd Sh[illegible] | [illegible]/96 | $18.99 |
| Battlegrnd Waterloo | 05/96 | $19.99 |
| Battl[illegible]kmgua | 01/99 | $44.99 |
| Bomb[illegible] the Reich | 11/99 | $5[illegible].99 |
| B[illegible] | [illegible] | $[illegible] |

| Title | Release | Price |
|---|---|---|
| [illegible] Fuc M[illegible] | 10/94 | $15.99 |
| [illegible] Ad Gene[illegible] | [illegible] | $4[illegible].99 |
| Close Combat 2 | [illegible] | $1[illegible].99 |
| Cmpgns Ame[illegible] C[illegible] War | 10/99 | $55.99 |
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| Oper Art Wa[illegible] Pk 1 | 02/94 | $[illegible].99 |
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| Steel Panthers 3 | 11/97 | $1[illegible].99 |
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| [illegible] B[illegible]nd[illegible] | 11/95 | $2[illegible].99 |
| [illegible] | 02/95 | $9.99 |
| [illegible] | 0[illegible]/95 | $9.99 |
| War Along the Mohawk | 04/96 | $19.99 |
| War in Europe | 01/99 | $39.99 |
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| W[illegible] | [illegible] | $29.99 |
| Wa[illegible] SD12 | [illegible] | $[illegible].99 |
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| Wargame CS2 SD[illegible] | [illegible]/96 | $1[illegible].99 |
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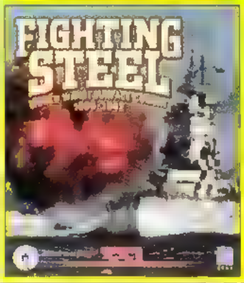

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| CH F[illegible] | [illegible] | $64.99 |
| CH F[illegible] | 11/9[illegible] | $[illegible]4.99 |
| CH F[illegible] | [illegible] | $6[illegible] |
| CH Flight Sim Yoke USB | 03/99 | $94.99 |
| [illegible] | 04/9[illegible] | $[illegible] |
| H[illegible] | [illegible] | $95.99 |
| H[illegible] | [illegible] | $[illegible] |
| H[illegible] | [illegible] | $[illegible] |
| H[illegible] | [illegible] | $[illegible].99 |
| H F[illegible] | [illegible] | $4[illegible].99 |
| H F[illegible] | [illegible]/94 | $[illegible].99 |
| H F[illegible] | [illegible] | $54.[illegible] |
| H T[illegible] | [illegible] | $[illegible] |
| H[illegible] | [illegible] | $[illegible] |

| Title | Release | Price |
|---|---|---|
| EvrGlide Attk Mse Pd 10 | [illegible] | $1[illegible] |
| [illegible] Attk M[illegible] | [illegible]/99 | $[illegible] |
| Gravis PC G[illegible] | [illegible] | $[illegible] |
| Gravis PC Ga[illegible] | [illegible]/96 | $26.99 |
| Gravis X[illegible] Game Pd | 07/98 | $4[illegible] |
| Gravis PC [illegible] USB | [illegible]/99 | $29.99 |
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| Ltech ThunderPad | 08/96 | $19.99 |
| [illegible] WingMan Frce Jstk | 10/98 | $94.99 |
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| Ma[illegible] Andretti Wh[illegible] | [illegible]/98 | $1[illegible].99 |
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| Saitek C[illegible] | 11/98 | $38.99 |
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| Saitek R[illegible] Wh | 12/98 | $[illegible] |
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| Saitek X-36[illegible] | 04/98 | $69.99 |
| Saitek X[illegible] | 06/98 | $18.99 |
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| TM F[illegible] | [illegible] | $1[illegible] |
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| AOpen PA3010-N [illegible] AGP | [illegible]/99 | $2[illegible]9.99 |
| ATI All in Wonder 3D | 0[illegible]/99 | $299.99 |
| ATI All Wonder 16 AGP | 05/99 | $239.99 |
| ATI Rage Fury 32MB | [illegible]/99 | $189.99 |
| ATI Xpert 128 16MB | [illegible]/99 | $49.99 |
| C[illegible] 3D B[illegible] S[illegible] 32 | 06/99 | $129.99 |
| Diamond Viper V550 | 01/99 | $149.99 |
| Dmnd Stealth III S540 | 05/99 | $119.99 |
| Dmnd Vpr V770 Ult AGP | 05/99 | $229.99 |
| G[illegible] Xentor TN[illegible] | [illegible]/99 | $129.99 |
| Mat[illegible] M[illegible] MAX | 0[illegible]/99 | $199.99 |
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| VideoLogic Neon 250 | 06/99 | $199.99 |

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| Sound Blaster LIVE | 08/98 | $1[illegible].99 |
| Sound Blaster LIVE! Value | 10/98 | $99.99 |
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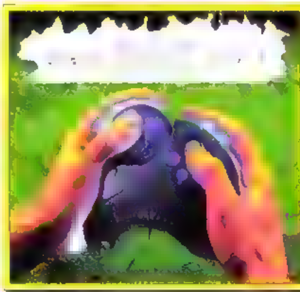

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**Saitek (Hardware)**
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| CROC 2 | 09/99 | $39.99 |
| Cel Medieva | 09/98 | $36.99 |
| Gungan Frontier | 05/99 | $2[illegible].99 |
| Machines | 04/99 | $39.99 |
| Missile Command Classic | 09/99 | $34.99 |
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| Title | Release | Price |
|---|---|---|
| Plane Cra[illegible] | [illegible]/98 | $14.99 |
| P[illegible] P[illegible]ba[illegible] Big Race USA | 04/99 | $26.99 |
| Rogue Squadron | 1[illegible]/98 | $46.99 |
| Sinistar Unleashed | 06/99 | $24.99 |
| Space Invaders | 09/99 | $42.99 |
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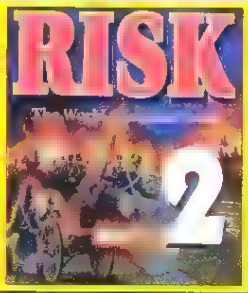


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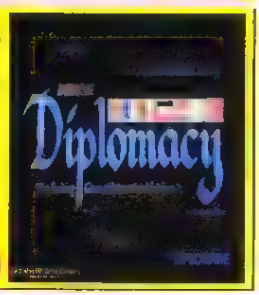


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## BOARD GAMES

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| Age of Renaissance | [illegible] | [illegible] |
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| Barbarossa Attacks | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| Battle Mate | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| Battlefront WWII | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| [illegible] | [illegible] | [illegible] |
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| Home Before Leaves Fall | 05/99 | $99.99 |
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| Sex with Rocky | [illegible] | [illegible] |
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| Call of Cthulhu 5th Ed | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| Castle Falkenstein | [illegible] | [illegible] |
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# Reviewing the reviews

## Call to Mediocrity

Bravo to Tom Chick's *Civilization Call to Power* review [*CGS+ 104*]. I'm so embarrassed that I actually called a store to find out if they had this game yet. And you can't believe the horrible groan that emanated from me the first time I was trying to choose a new advance from the science screen only to realize that underneath that window, my enemies were advancing, and shooting at me and *I couldn't see it because I'm still trying to choose between "corporation" and "nuclear power!"*

Thanks for warning off others, even though it was too late for me

**Cody**

## Battle of Returns

I purchased *Battle of Britain* before I received your magazine [*Review, CGS+ 104*]. The game is just as reviewed. I tried to return it to CompUSA, but they said, "I'm sorry, we don't refund open games." I sent a e-mail to TalonSoft in hopes of a return, and their response was, "were sorry, we can't help you." Every other product in the world comes with at least some kind of a guarantee. You get some socks from K-Mart and it's OK to return them for a refund. What's the deal with computer games?

I remember the days of music refunds. You bought a CD or tape and you didn't like it, you could return it. Who is going to continue to buy a product, sight unseen with no buyback if it doesn't meet your needs? I really think software people are kicking themselves in the butt by these policies. I spent $50.00 and it's oh well

**Ned Scarisbrick**

*Actually, many music stores do not accept returns, only exchanges for defective products. It's the same principle—you could be going home and making copies. With the proliferation of home CD burners, it'll likely become even more common.*

*Your only guard against this is to ask the sales people what their return policy is before purchasing a product. If they do not allow returns, consider purchasing the software elsewhere. —ed*

## Chicklets

Tom Chick's review of *Starsiege* [*CGS+ 103*] was dead on when he called the single player game as "criminally underdone." I was able to complete the human campaign in five hours, and the cybrid campaign in seven hours, and I am an average game player at best. This was substantially less than the time it took to complete *MechWarrior 2*, and was compounded further by the lack of a random mission generator. While I did enjoy the game more than Mr Chick did, 12 hours of gameplay for $40 just doesn't seem right.

I apologize in advance for my AOL account.

**Fred G. Brooks**

I have to totally disagree with Tom Chick's review of *Starsiege*. I think it deserves *at least* 3 ½ stars. First of all, the multiplayer is simply awesome! I can't find any other game with such high-end graphics that runs as smoothly, even over a 28.8k connection, not even *TRIBES*.

Second, the point-and-click aiming system is simply genius! I have always hated the dang turret designs of other "Big Robot" games.

Third, circle battles are half the fun! What do you think you do in *MechWarrior 2*? You don't run straight ahead (and we don't in *Starsiege* either, at least none of us veterans who have been playing since March) and plunge in weapons firing.

Fourth, Big HERCs don't have an advantage on the field. Me and my faithful Talon usually grab high scores on the servers!

Fifth, HERC *does* stand for something: HERC is short for HERCULEAN which stands for Humanifor-Emulation Roboticized Combat Unit with Leg-Articulated Navigation. It is on page 21 of the Compendium that came with the game.

The only point I agree with in your article is that the big Hercs are too fast.

**ES_Master**
**Leader of the BlackWatch Squadr**

## Food for thought

The article "Quake III arrives. [*CGS+ 104*] features a perfect example of what is wrong with software companies. You quote id's John Carmack as saying "The Mac testers will find some obvious problems . . . we will fix them. The later releases will be better.

If the problems are "obvious" why didn't id fix them before releasing the test?

**Stephen Kupchack**

## Road to Apologies

In your last issue you have mentioned me as *Dragon Realms* player Warokiki and posted info about my sale of haversack in article named "Selling On the Real Estate" [*Road to Nowhere, CGS+ 103*] would appreciate if you explain how can you write false information and post my name without my prior knowledge. In the article, it was stated that the item was sold for $500, but it was actually sold for 400 in game coins, platinums

**Vladimir Serganin**

*The ad in question was somewhat ambiguous when referring to the monetary unit used for the sale of the item. It merely said $400, which in the context of other people selling items for "real" as opposed to "virtual" money, was assumed to mean regular dollars. We regret the error. —ed*

## More adventure blues

This letter is in response to the letter written by Jay C. Parangalan [*"Adventure Blues," Rebound, CGS+ 104*]. He seems to miss the point just a bit, which is common when discussing the virtues of 3D. I view the visuals in games on the level of any other art, as they take just as much style, talent, and hard work as any other medium. But some tend to cry foul anytime someone even hints that 3D graphics are not completely necessary.

I re-read the article in question after seeing his letter, and it seems there was nothing in it that would justify saying that it compared "apples and oranges" as he put it. "At what price 3D?" discussed adventure games with heavy doses of 3D elements, and how those elements don't necessarily enhance the game play. Also, I doubt that it can be debated that those who tend to suffer motion sickness may have a less than enjoyable experience playing 3D games.

And as for Fleischauer's quote about blocky 3D being hypocritical, I think the problem here is that 2D graphics can be so intricate and detailed that many assume that they are 3D. Just look at the screen shots of *Diablo 2*. Here we have a 2D sprite-based game that doesn't experience any of the limitations Mr. Parangalan mentions. The characters in this game don't seem to be limited to dodging only left or right. We could argue whether or not *Diablo 2* is an adventure or action game, but that's irrelevant. The point is that 2D doesn't hamper the quality of a game the way Mr. Parangalan suggests.

3D graphics can be a fantastic addition to a game, but they are far from necessary. And a 3D environment won't guarantee a quality interface. Mr. Parangalan says, "We need to understand that the trend is an evolution and not a revolution." However, 3D is not an evolution. It's just another tool in a game designers tool box. The key is knowing when and when not to use that tool.

**André C. Miranda**

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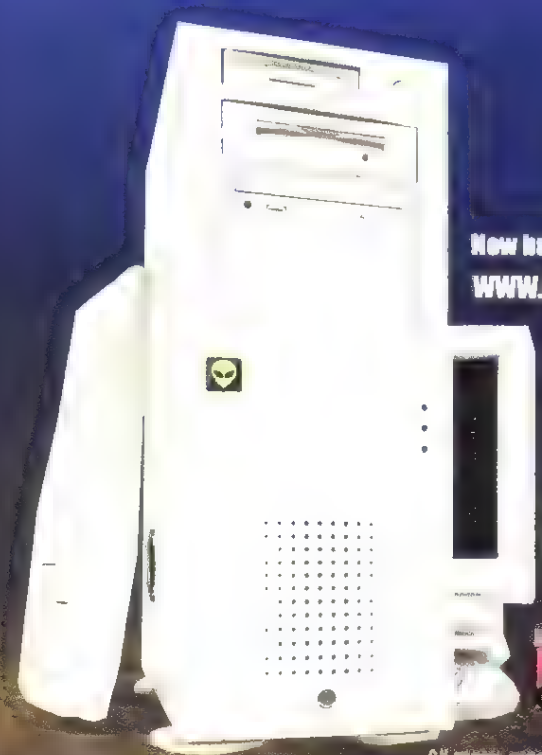

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## Is it... SATAN?

I recently received your magazine through a promotion, and I handed it to my oldest son thinking that it was a magazine for kids about computer games. He handed it back to me and said "Mom, this is really gross!" Upon opening the magazine I could not believe my eyes. I must say that simply by flipping through to see if the entire magazine was like the first few pages, I found that it was the most pagan piece of "literature" I have ever laid eyes on. I cannot imagine that any adult would read, much less pay for this satanic material. No wonder our children today are so messed up and out shooting and blowing up lives when they have access to things like these.

I hope that you all sit down and think about what a positive difference you could make in the world if you applied yourselves to writing about creative, mind boosting games instead of twisted, satanic games that you are promoting.

**Pam J. Parkman**

*You missed the editorial that explained this a month earlier. I'm not Satan—my picture just makes me look somewhat evil. —ed*

## Bad language

I am a Catholic reader of your magazine, and I don't mind violence in your magazine. But I am shocked at some of the language in your magazine. In your review of *Everquest*, thank you for a real review, with the good and the bad. I was insulted that Robert Mayer had to swear say how good it was. "One reason it is so easy to overlook some of *EverQuest*'s failings is that the world looks so d#$% pretty." If things like this continue, I will buy another magazine, as well as urging by friends to do the same.

**Matthew Sercely**

*Damn, we lost another reader. But seriously, we've had considerably worse language in past issues of the magazine. Not that we use profanity gratuitously, but if you're concerned about seeing and reading words that can appear on network TV (which is about the extent of what we do allow), you probably shouldn't be reading the magazine. —ed*

## Again with the urine

I just read the article on *Diablo II* [*CGS+ 104*] and found an error. From the article: "From *Diablo* came the term PK, the acronym for the player killers who wrought havoc on Blizzard's battle.net multiplayer service by luring players into apparently cooperative games and killing them."

The term PK was used by MUDders as a term for player killers long before *Diablo* was ever conceived. Sorry for the waste of time but when I read that it really annoyed the piss out of me.

**J.D.**

*Better have that prostate checked. —ed*

## Giant Mechs

With the recently published *Starsiege* and the arrival of *MechWarrior 3*, I have started once again to shudder violently at every mention of "giant robots" in the pages of your and other magazines.

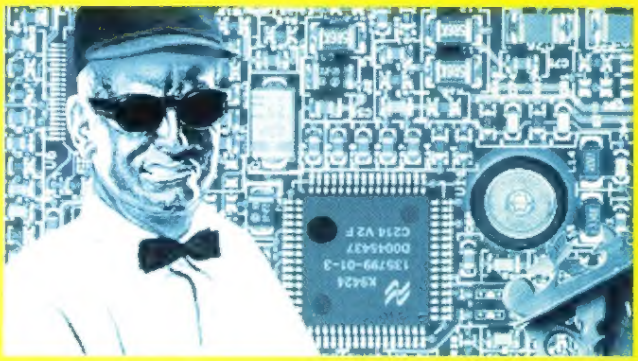
Let's set the record straight here and now: Mechs, Gears, HERCs and other humanoid-shaped fighting vehicles *are not robots*! Really, these are just tanks on legs instead of treads or wheels. There is a human being inside, *piloting* the thing, making it a vehicle or a battle suit.

Now I know you keep using that term in part because you need a short catchy phrase to describe a specialized genre of computer game, but please find another, okay?

By the way, ever notice that the producers of these games (the computer ones and the original "paper" ones) *never* used the term robot? This is specifically a computer gaming magazine bias. Weird.

**Stephane Brown**

*From now on we will refer to them as "Giant Tanks on Legs Instead of Treads or Wheels" games. —ed*



## Hardware advocacy

You have a position of responsibility. It simply is not acceptable to allow one of your writers to irresponsibly slam 3dfx products. Allowing writers to refer to a current product by an older product name (Banshee, Sr., Jr.) is, as I have already stated, irresponsible.

The totally unprofessional writing style of Jason Cross and his "reviews" of more than one card from this manufacturer of videocards is evidence that you don't care to present the facts on a product, but rather the slanted opinions of a disgruntled writer. Many people, including highly technically-educated people are thrilled with this V3 product. I am thrilled with this V3 product. I have built several computer systems from scratch. I am sure Jason Cross can say the same... or can he? He obviously didn't have access to actual hardware for if he did it would be a different tale indeed.

My point is that 3dfx has a fine product in the V3 and you have a rogue writer attempting to make a name for himself by running down a perfectly good product of a publicly traded company.

Jason Cross will not make a name for himself but will drag your companies reputation even further down.

**Kevin Horan**

*We weren't aware we were supposed to treat public companies differently from private ones when delivering opinions on their products. But to address your specific points, we gave the cards 3 and 4 stars for the 2000 and 3000 models respectively (a correction for the latter is on page 91), neither of which constitutes a "slam."*

*It's actually irresponsible to accuse someone of bias and factual errors without giving examples And just in case anyone is curious, of course we had a final card, it's absurd to think otherwise (we don't make up benchmarks). In fact, the 3000 is currently in my work system. It's an excellent card, though I'd really prefer 32-bit color so I could avoid* Quake III *envy.*

*And one final note: they're just videocards, not a lifestyle choice. —ed*

# Talk to us *pleeeeeeeeease.*

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**Letters may be edited for space considerations.**


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| 6-7, 20-21, 62-63, 145 | Eidos | www.eidos.com |
| 53, 55, 57, 59 | G. O. D. | www.godgames.com |
| 42-43, 48-49 | GT Interactive | www.gtinteractive.com |
| 8-9, 14-15, 65, 71 | InterPlay | www.interplay.com |
| 2, 34-35, 50-51 | Microprose | www.microprose.com |
| 18-19, 83 | Microsoft | www.microsoft.com/games |
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| 37-39 | Red Orb | www.redorb.com |
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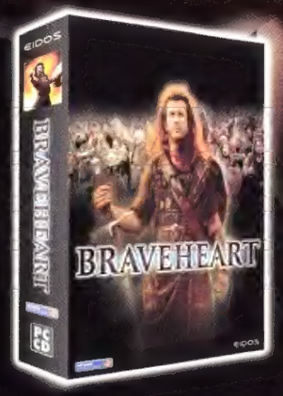


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